

# gay

# COMMUNITY NEWS

FEBRUARY 19-25, 1989

VOLUME 16

NO 31

BIPAD: 65498

\$1.00

FOR SIXTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

## More New York City smut theaters shut

*"We have no teams of 'sex busters'" says health department official*

By Chris Bull

NEW YORK — Just three months after shutting down Cinema 14, a gay porn theater, the New York City Health Department closed down on Feb. 10 two other sex establishments — the Bijou Cinema, a gay porn theater, and the Variety, which showed straight porn films — for allegedly allowing its customers to engage in unsafe sex.

AIDS activists and educators slammed the city's action, claiming it was based more on AIDS hysteria than public health concerns. "This is an easy way for the city to tell the residents of New York that they are doing something about AIDS, when they are actually doing nothing," said Michael Signoreli of ACT UP/New York. "Meanwhile, the city has made no effort to educate the gay men who visit the theaters and the city's health care system is falling apart." He blasted the city for leaving the gay community to educate itself about AIDS, and until this year failing to fund gay male educational projects — nine years into the epidemic.

The city health department has responded that the cinemas were given repeated warnings to "clean up their act" and failed to do so, forcing the city to take strong action. In legal briefs filed Feb. 10, City Health Commissioner Stephen Joseph charged that theater owners were "essentially operating an AIDS breeding ground with profit being the driving force."

Inspectors from the city said they witnessed 114 acts of unsafe sex at the Variety theater at 110 Third Avenue, and 34 at the nearby Bijou Theater over the last year. New York state law defines unsafe sex as unprotected anal and/or oral intercourse. According to the Department of Health, the theaters were closed under the same ordinance invoked to shut Cinema 14, another gay porn theater, last September. The ordinance permits the city to close for one year any business that is deemed a threat to public health. The three closures are the first since 1985 when the city shut down the Mineshaft, the New St. Mark's Baths and Plato's Retreat.

Doron Gopstein, attorney for the city in the case, said the management of each theater received two warnings about unsafe sex on their premises before the city moved to shut them down. In both cases, said Gopstein, owners promised to correct health code violations by providing more policing of patrons, by improving lighting in the theater and by eliminating areas where unsafe sex often occurred. When improvements were not forthcoming, the city was left with no alternative, said Gopstein.

"Our goal is not to close facilities.... Everyone wins when only safe sex is going on — the patrons, the theater and the city. It is really not that difficult to comply with our regulations, but they failed," Gopstein commented.

But Signoreli criticized the city for failing to educate porn theater patrons. "ACT UP's position is that closing any establishment is an infringement of rights. But the main thing is that when you close places, you don't help stop the spread of AIDS.

You merely push it underground. The city missed an amazing opportunity to educate people," he said. Signoreli said that although ACT UP opposes the closing of the theaters, it would not officially protest the closures. He said the group is focusing most of its efforts on a massive March 28 takeover of New York City Hall to protest the city's neglect of the AIDS epidemic.

Marvin Bogner, assistant city health commissioner, rebutted Signoreli's claim that the city has failed to educate porn theater patrons. "We have an on-going AIDS education program for the entire sex industry, including gay establishments," he said. Bogner admitted, however, that the health department had not "actually educated" any patrons of the theaters. "We offered condoms and posters to the management. We offered to help them change behaviors in the theaters. But they said they would do it themselves. These are people out to make a quick buck. It's unfair that we bear the brunt of criticism when it's the management that caused the problems."

The majority of sex establishments have complied with health department requests, said Bogner. He said that investigations into sexual activity at sex establishments are ongoing and that "when unsafe sex is observed in public, we will take action. But we have no teams of 'sex busters.' What people do in the privacy of their own bedrooms is not our concern," said Bogner. Neither the owner of the Bijou, Nick Nicolaou, nor Arthur Morgenroth, owner of the Variety, could be reached for comment.

(According to the *New York Times*, another gay porn theater, the Adonis, is also planning to close voluntarily next month.)

Several members of lesbian and gay groups criticized the city for violating the right to privacy of porn theater patrons. Mickey Wheatley, staff attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, told *GCN*, "We don't support establishments refusing to provide condoms and safe sex information to patrons. Failing to educate patrons is just as dangerous as sex police. Nevertheless, closing the establishments is an over-reaction. Less intrusive approaches would have been far better."

Wheatley cited a 1986 decision by a New York State Court of Appeals judge which said a Buffalo bookstore could not be closed until other "sanctions" were taken to stop unsafe sex. He recommended that the city draw up specific regulations requiring theater owners to provide condoms and safe sex information to customers before taking more restrictive actions.

"The city must try the least restrictive actions possible before infringing on people's fundamental right to privacy, including sexual activity. The city has a compelling interest to stop the spread of AIDS, but it should use less restrictive measures before trampling on people's rights," said Wheatley.

However, Lambda will not file suit against the city to challenge the closures, said Wheatley. Lambda's 1984 challenge to

Continued on page 6

Inside: Special Supplement

## History in the Making: Personal, Political and Cultural Perspectives on Black Lesbian and Gay Life

## Black gay club in DC stays afloat

*"We are into surviving"*

By Chris Bull

WASHINGTON — Thanks to a successful Jan. 26 fundraising party that raised over \$8,000, the Clubhouse, the only Black gay men's social club in this predominantly Black city, will remain open. The Clubhouse is also negotiating with the city to obtain a liquor license for its Saturday night parties, which would help increase revenue. According to Clubhouse members, the club was on the verge of closing down Feb. 1 because it was three months behind paying rent for its space at 1296 Upshur Street N.W.

The club has suffered a steady decline in attendance from about 700 per night in the early '80s to only about 150 per night today. Clubhouse general manager Aundre Scott indicated that AIDS, the club's lack of a liquor license, and other social alternatives are among the factors that have contributed to declining membership, which once numbered 3,000 people from all over the world. "We have lost about 200 people to AIDS.... Drugs and AIDS in the Black community have really taken a toll on the older generation of men who once came here. And people who first came here at 19 are in their mid-thirties now and are doing different things," said Scott.

Scott said the club Trax, a huge disco which caters to Black gay men on Wednesday and Sunday nights, has also drawn many young men away from the Clubhouse. "We have gone through several generational transitions. In the middle and late '70s dancing and socializing was very popular. Now people are more into their own private parties. The youth now have different priorities than we had," said Scott.

He credited the Washington lesbian and gay community with supporting the Clubhouse in a difficult time. "The community was there for us when we needed help. Members and the community were very supportive. We had a great crowd for our fundraising party. We are into surviving."

A steering committee has been formed to chart the future of the Clubhouse, said Scott. The committee will come up with recommendations about how the club can better serve the changing needs of the community. New promotions and a renovation of the club are under consideration, he said. The club plans to hold a "marathon party" in April, which will cater to an older crowd from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. and the younger crowd from 2 a.m. to 8 a.m. Membership requirements will also be relaxed in an attempt to bring in new people.

"The Clubhouse has been a central meeting place for Black gay men in this city. It's important for us to have our own space," said Jim Harvey, a club member and deputy director of the Whitman-Walker Health Clinic in D.C. He said the club is a place where the Black gay community can organize politically and also fight the AIDS epidemic in the city. Us Helping Us, a collective dedicated to caring for people with AIDS, and AIDS prevention in the Black community, was launched by the Clubhouse, said Harvey.

Scott said the club was once attended by about 25 percent women. He said the women initiated a Thursday night "women's night" in the early '80s but moved to a new spot with a liquor license. "Losing women hurt us. The community has divided and subdivided many times," he said.

"Many of the bars in the city are patronized by Black men, but none of them are owned or run by Black people. The club is an exception to that rule," continued Harvey. He said none of the other bars in the city are as community-minded as the Clubhouse.

Scott agreed and added that the Clubhouse provided a variety of supportive roles for community members. "When we were going well, we helped people from around the country. We paid rent, phone bills when people were in trouble. Now we

Continued on page 3



## Quot of the week

“Men have legitimate problems when ... because of Big Brother in Washington and affirmative action, they are passed over for a promotion and a woman who is maybe not as well qualified is given the job.”

— *South Carolina State Senator Ryan Shealy, who plans to introduce a bill to create a state Commission on Men. The Commission would combat what Shealy calls “the steady erosion toward ... men becoming wimps.” Shealy also recently fought against a marital rape bill and spoke out against a federal court decision that he said denies a husband the right to prevent his wife from having an abortion.*

## Hudson’s lover gets \$14.5 million

LOS ANGELES — A jury awarded Rock Hudson’s lover, Marc Christian, \$14.5 million in damages Feb. 15 for “extreme emotional distress” caused by Hudson’s failure to tell his lover he had AIDS. The Los Angeles Superior Court jury, by a 10-2 margin, found that Hudson and his private secretary engaged in “outrageous conduct” by concealing Hudson’s condition from Christian.

The case sets legal precedent, according to the *Boston Globe*, because it is the first case in which a plaintiff has won a jury verdict without actually contracting the sexually transmitted disease they were exposed to. Christian, 35, has continued to test negative for HIV antibodies. (HIV is a virus thought by many to be a cause of AIDS.)

Denise McWilliams, director of the AIDS Law Project for Boston’s Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), told *GCN* she thought it was possible the case would be overturned on appeal. “I assume it will be appealed ... and the California courts may overturn it because it fails to show a physical injury resulting from [Christian’s] exposure to HIV. The other possibility is that the jury verdict [of \$14.5 million] could be reduced.”

McWilliams said that if the decision stands, it could set a legal precedent that places the burden to have safe sex only on the person who is infected. “People need to be responsible for their own sexual activity.... [Christian] should have been told [about Hudson’s condition], but in the real world you can’t rely on other people telling you everything you need to know. [This decision] shifts the responsibility to the infected person and removes it from the person who is assumed to be not infected.”

□ Jennie McKnight

## S.D. lesbian convicted of murder

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — A 24-year-old lesbian was convicted in early February of first-degree murder in what the gay newspaper *Update* called a “love triangle killing.” According to *Update*, Sherral Lyn Owens Clayton, a sailor, was convicted of killing Shelly Dupee, another Navy woman, over a third woman both had been seeing.

The prosecutor in the case, Lisa Chappell, argued that Clayton should be convicted of first-degree murder because Dupee had been stabbed 54 times and her throat had been slashed. Chappell told jurors that Clayton had “killed the competition.”

Clayton argued that she had killed Dupee in self-defense after Dupee suddenly attacked her in her apartment.

Clayton will be sentenced March 6. She faces a prison term of 25 years to life, according to *Update*.

□ Jennie McKnight

## Dukakis appoints gay judge

BOSTON — The first openly-gay judge to be appointed by Gov. Michael Dukakis was nominated Feb. 15 by the state’s Judicial Nominating Council. Dermot J. Meagher, a lawyer with the Boston Board of Overseers, was nominated to the Boston Municipal Court.

Meagher was open about his sexual preference to the Nominating Council, according to the *Boston Globe*. He is a four-

ding member of the Mass. Lesbian and Gay Bar Association and a former board member of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). He has also worked with the AIDS Action Committee and served as a Boston Human Rights Commissioner since 1985, according to the *Globe*.

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of GLAD, told the *Globe*, “It’s a very important appointment, because it is the first openly gay or lesbian appointment to the judiciary in Massachusetts. He is not going to be the first gay judge in Massachusetts, but the first openly gay judge in Massachusetts, and that’s a wonderful and important distinction.”

□ Jennie McKnight

## Feminists prepare for massive mobilization

WASHINGTON — Growing public concern about the future of abortion rights and intensified grassroots activism are the two reasons planners at the National Organization for Women (NOW) are expecting unprecedented numbers of women to participate in the April 9 March for Women’s Equality/Women’s Lives in Washington, D.C.

According to NOW, the sponsor of the mobilization, chapters around the country are reporting huge numbers of activists planning to make the trek to the nation’s capitol. For example, by January, 50 buses had already been reserved to transport feminists from the Philadelphia area, with 30 coming from New Jersey and 20 from Boston. Similarly successful organizing efforts were also reported from NOW chapters in less metropolitan areas. In addition, reproductive rights organizations nationwide are mobilizing activists, and college campuses are organizing contingents.

Over 60 national organizations have endorsed the March, which some activists estimate may include as many as a million women and men.

For information about the April 9 mobilization/contact the NOW chapter in your city or state. The phone number of the national office of NOW is (202) 347-2279.

□ Jennie McKnight

## Black men to meet in Florida

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Plans are underway for “Make It Happen,” the ninth annual convention of the National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT). The gathering will be held in Tallahassee July 2-8.

The convention will include speakers Richard Mohr, a gay activist and philosopher; Allan Spear, openly gay Minnesota state senator; and Thea Bowman, a consultant for intercultural awareness. There will also be many panels, workshops and cultural and entertainment events to attend.

According to Ollie Lee Taylor, Recording Secretary of NABWMT, there are several things convention organizers hope to “make happen,” including: encouraging an “atmosphere of support for those in interracial relationships, seeking such relationships, in same race relationships or no relationships at all”; understanding the effects of AIDS in minority as well as majority communities; an examination by participants of their involvement in opposing racism and class bias within the gay community; a reaching out to form coalitions with other groups and people sharing the goals of fighting “discrimination based on class, sexism or race in our society”; and the acquisition of “skills and inspiration among our membership to provide for our cultural, political and social support among the chapters.”

Registration for the convention is \$65 if mailed before March 10. Housing and meal plans are also available. For registration information, write to: BWMT Tallahassee, Big Bend Florida, 411 Chapel Drive, Box 226, Tallahassee, FL 32304-3321; or call (904) 681-9499.

□ Jennie McKnight

NEWSNOTES COMPILED BY  
JENNIE McKNIGHT

*As part of GCN’s efforts to increase its coverage of AIDS medical and treatment issues, we plan to regularly publish “AIDS Treatment Notes.” Most of the information here comes from newsletters written and published by people with AIDS (PWAs), people with ARC (PWARCs) and other AIDS activists.*

*Many of these newsletters print disclaimers withholding their endorsement from any particular treatment options. Like these other sources, GCN provides medical information to encourage discussion about the politics of health and medicine and to help people make personal decisions about AIDS treatments. We do not endorse any specific treatment or study.*

## Promising treatments for ’89

SAN FRANCISCO — In the first issue of *AIDS Treatment Notes* this year, editor John James listed several AIDS treatments that he considered “likely to become important in 1989.” The list includes treatments that are not necessarily new, but may be more widely available this year.

James’s list includes:

- ddi (dideoxyinosine) — a drug in the same class as AZT, but which is apparently much less toxic. According to the most recent issue of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR) directory, ddi is believed to be 10 times less toxic than AZT. Human trials of this treatment are in the very early stages, and according to James they are bogged down in red tape and institutional inertia. He predicts that since ddi is easy to manufacture, an underground distribution of the drug is inevitable.

- Passive immunotherapy — the process of transfusing plasma from healthy HIV-antibody-positive donors into recipients who are no longer able to produce antibodies to HIV due to immune system deterioration. To date only 20 people have received this treatment, and on Jan. 27 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved human trials for HIVIG (Human Immune Virus Immune Globulin), the concentrated plasma used in passive immunotherapy. James cautions that FDA restrictions and improper administration of the treatment by physicians are two serious problems. A patient support group organized to obtain access to passive immunotherapy exists in San Francisco. The Passive Immunotherapy Project can be reached by phone at (415) 549-9137.

- Antiviral herbs and extracts — especially hypercin, Compound Q, and Chinese anti-infection herbs. James lists these three traditional medicinal herb treatments that have shown antiviral activity in laboratory tests. Hypercin is a chemical found in the St. John’s Wort plant. James cites the a physician who is working with five patients taking “Hyperforat,” a high-strength extract of the plant that has shown “good to excellent results.” James cautions that St. John’s Wort plant products marketed in U.S. health food stores are generally useless because they do not contain enough hypercin.

Compound Q (also called GLQ 223, but not the same as coenzyme Q) is a protein derived from Chinese herbs. It has shown promise against HIV in laboratory tests, but human trials have not been done. Permission for human trials has been sought by the developer.

Eleven of 27 Chinese anti-infection herbs have shown promise fighting HIV in the laboratory. See *GCN’s AIDS Treatment Notes*, Dec. 4, 1988.

- FLT (fluorodeoxythymidine) — an unsuccessful cancer therapy tested 20 years ago in East Germany. This drug has been found more effective than AZT in the laboratory, and less toxic than AZT in humans — although it does cause bone marrow suppression like AZT. Widespread testing and availability of the drug will be slowed by international and domestic marketing problems. The drug has been tested so far in Sweden, where further human tests are unlikely to take place because of the relatively few numbers of people with AIDS. Development of the drug in the U.S., which will likely require the sale of the patent rights to the drug to a large U.S. pharmaceutical company, may be delayed, according to James, by “red tape alone — or rather the empires and vested interests which benefit from it.”

- Azidouridine (AzdU) — a drug that has shown effectiveness against HIV in

laboratory tests. It has demonstrated “no toxicity when given orally to animals in high doses,” according to James. Human trials are scheduled to start this year.

- DT4 — a drug shown in the laboratory to be less toxic than AZT, and about as effective. Human trials will begin this year.

- CD4 — a drug that has generated much publicity and is currently being tested in humans. James lists this treatment, but cautions that he has not heard much enthusiasm for the treatment expressed by those directly involved with it.

□ Jennie McKnight

## AIDS info available in Portuguese

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Gerry Studds, an openly gay member of Congress and one of the strongest supporters of federal AIDS education efforts, has mounted a campaign to distribute copies in Portuguese translation of the government-sponsored pamphlet “Understanding AIDS” to the Portuguese communities in his Tenth Congressional District, which includes part of southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod.

Studds plans to distribute copies of the informational pamphlet to local Portuguese community groups, New Bedford area social service organizations, and AIDS support groups throughout the District. The population of New Bedford, the largest city in the Tenth District, is 65 percent Portuguese.

To receive a copy of the “Understanding AIDS” in Portuguese, contact the National AIDS Information Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6003, Rockville, MD 20850; or call (800) 458-5231.

□ Jennie McKnight

## FDA grants pentamidine license

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Feb. 6 approved aerosolized pentamidine (AP) for limited use.

The drug is widely thought to be effective treating and preventing pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), the leading cause of death among people with AIDS (PWAs). Under the pentamidine Investigational New Drug (IND) guidelines, physicians will now be allowed to prescribe the drug to PWAs who have had at least one previous bout of PCP, who test HIV-antibody-positive and who have a T-4 cell count less than 200. Until now, PWAs could only receive AP by participating in scientific clinical trials, whose access is even more limited than under INDs.

The drug was licensed five years ago for use through injection. The FDA decision allows pentamidine to be administered in aerosolized form, which many PWAs, physicians and researchers believe is the most effective way to take the drug.

The FDA’s approval of AP allows physicians to administer the drug in an outpatient clinic or through home health care. Previously, treating PCP often required hospitalization. A one-year supply of the drug costs \$2,000, according to LyphoMed, the drug’s producer. Most PWAs require ongoing regular treatments to prevent the onset of PCP.

While praising the FDA’s decision, AIDS activists criticized the length of the licensing process. “At least the FDA finally recognized the usefulness of AP. Most people realized it years ago.... I’m concerned that the restrictions are too strict. They should not require a previous bout with PCP to get the treatment again,” said Ray Schmidt of ACT UP/Boston.

□ Chris Bull

### PWA newsletters:

*Treatment News*, GMHC Department of Medical Information, 132 West 24th Street, Box 274, New York, NY 10011

*AIDS Treatment News*, Box 411256, San Francisco, CA 94141

*PWA Coalition Newsline*, 263A West 19th Street, Room 125, New York, NY 10011

*Alert*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029

*The Body Positive* 263A West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011



# Public health official proposes 'open' AIDS clinical trials

*Plan would expand access to treatments, but the role of participants in process is unclear*

By Simpson Garfinkel

SAN FRANCISCO — Only one out of nine people diagnosed with AIDS or AIDS-related complex (ARC) is enrolled in a clinical trial designed to test a new therapy or treatment for the syndrome or its associated diseases. Often slots in testing programs are limited to people in certain stages of the disease or to people in a certain geographic area.

A professor at Harvard University's School of Public Health, Marvin Zelen, wants to change that. Under a new plan advanced by Zelen at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) here early in January, every person with AIDS or ARC (PWA, PWARC) or who is HIV-antibody-positive who wishes to take part in a clinical trial could have that option.

Zelen, an expert in evaluating clinical trials and chair of Harvard's Department of Biostatistics, proposed a new "open protocol system" for conducting future AIDS clinical trials. Experiments would be conducted on a nation-wide basis, and any physician in the country who signed up could enroll any PWA, PWARC, or HIV antibody-positive individual in an ongoing experiment. Drugs would be provided for free.

The "closed" nature of most AIDS trials — meaning the strict limits on enrollment — has persuaded many PWAs to prescribe drugs for themselves that have not been approved and which have unknown effectiveness and toxicity, according to Zelen. Closed trials have also drastically limited the number of people who could participate in research, he said, at a time when "the number of scientific questions [regarding AIDS] is large and requires many more clinical trials than are currently in process."

Properly conducted clinical trials are vitally important, said Daniel F. Hoth, director of the AIDS program of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, because "there is simply no other way to determine which drug works, which does not, which is safe, and which is not."

In addition, the standard of care that people receive in clinical trials — which includes constant monitoring and treatment for accompanying diseases — is much higher than the standard they would otherwise enjoy. "Clinical trials, well designed and carefully applied, ought to be the treatment of choice for people with AIDS," says another panelist, Richard D. Gelber, an associate professor of Biostatistics at Harvard University.

Zelen argues that current AIDS trials are

flawed in part because they have been based on the National Cancer Institute's "cooperative cancer group" strategy for conducting tests of new cancer treatments. "But there are many differences between AIDS and cancer," he said, which necessitate a different approach.

Zelen's "open protocol system" would consist of a number of physicians around the country who would be pre-approved to take part in the trials. New physicians could sign up by filling out a questionnaire and attending a training session. The roster of approved physicians would be published. Zelen did not specify whether an existing government agency or other organization would administer his proposed system.

Those interested in participating in trials would contact a physician on the roster who would inform participants of the terms of current protocols. The physician could then register the patient by telephone or computer; drugs, detailed experimental protocol and forms for data collection would arrive at the physician's office within 24 hours. Zelen did not indicate whether his plan would include substantial input by those seeking treatment over which treatments they would receive.

The physician would monitor the progress of the PWA and periodically report on the patient's status to a national data collection center. Zelen's system would include a national telephone hot line for the use of those involved in the study, a quality control auditing system to assure the reliability of the findings, and an electronic mail system to allow medical consultation and the sharing of toxicity information.

"Everything that I have discussed is feasible right now," he said, estimating that a pilot program with 1,000 participants might cost as much as \$30 million. Such a pilot program would increase the number of people in AIDS-related drug trials by 25 percent.

"It is very important that we double, triple, or quadruple the number of patients in national AIDS clinical trials," he said. "Otherwise, we will be provoking human misery. As a country, we have to accelerate the whole process."

In his presentation of his proposal, Zelen did not mention Community-based Research Initiatives (CRIs), which are cooperative efforts developed by PWAs and their doctors to make treatments accessible and to gather data using ethical and humane methods. An assistant in Zelen's office told *GCN* that Zelen developed his proposal

Continued on page 6



Lesbian valentines smooch for gay rights

## Mass. gay rights bill gets public support

BOSTON — The ongoing State House-front vigil in support of lesbian and gay civil rights took on a holiday theme Feb. 14, as 30 lesbian and gay activists celebrated St. Valentine's Day by holding a kiss-in. The public rally and displays of affection were intended to encourage support for the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Bill and to focus attention on the day of public testimony in the State House Feb. 15. Several passing Beacon Hill motorists cheered demonstrators as they held signs reading, "Honk if you support lesbian and gay rights," and "We are everywhere and we're not going away," and took turns kissing (and posing) in front a ten-foot valentine which read, "The Right to Love."

On Feb. 16, after the public testimony was presented, the bill was voted favorably out of the Commerce and Labor Committee by a slim margin. The actual vote was nine in favor and five against, with three legislators "reserving their rights" to vote. According to Arline Isaacson, lobbyist for the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, Rep. Marilyn Travinsky (D-Southbridge), co-chair of the Committee, said she was opposed to the bill but agreed not to vote as a favor to the bill supporters.

Opponents to the bill killed the legislation in the previous two years by using delay tactics. In both 1987 and 1988, the bill was held up in the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading — where all bills are checked to ensure they are written in accordance with Senate rules before a final vote. Sen. Arthur Lewis (D-Jamaica Plain), the chair of that committee during both years, admittedly held the bill to prevent it from going to a final vote.

Sen. William MacLean, the new chair of the Committee on Bills in Third Reading, voted against the bill in the Commerce and Labor Committee. MacLean, who according to the *Boston Herald*, said he would not use his power as chair of the Committee on Bills in Third Reading to prevent any bills from passing, could not be reached for comment after the Commerce and Labor Committee hearing.

If the bill passes, it will be the second statewide lesbian/gay civil rights law in the country.

□ Judy Harris

## Michael Hirsch, NY AIDS activist, dies

By Andrew Miller

NEW YORK — Michael Hirsch, a prominent and outspoken AIDS activist, died on Feb. 3 from AIDS-related complications at St. Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village. He was 34 years old.

Hirsch was both a founding member and first executive director of the New York People with AIDS Coalition, the first organization run both by and for people with AIDS. The Coalition, which was formed in 1985, has subsequently become the largest group of its kind in the country. Similarly run organizations have sprung up in other cities. In 1987, Hirsch went on to form Body Positive, a support group for people who have tested antibody positive for HIV, a virus thought by many to be a cause of AIDS.

A testament to the broad-based respect engendered by Hirsch in the AIDS community was the sheer number of remembrances of him placed in the *New York Times* in the days following his death. Both individuals and AIDS organizations like God's Love We Deliver, Gay Men's Health Crisis and ACT UP, with which Hirsch had been involved since its inception, placed lengthy and often moving tributes to Hirsch in the paper.

Rona Affoumado, executive director of the Community Health Project, worked closely with Hirsch and speaks of him as a

driven, often strident activist, who really cared about people behind the issues. "He was able to say things and do things that none of us was able to do. He just said it the way it was, no matter who it was he was saying it to."

Hirsch was well known to the government health establishment, lobbying for better AIDS-related services, and loudly critical of it when he felt it had fallen short of its responsibilities. He was also involved with the workings of many other community based and national AIDS organizations. "His energy was extraordinary until the very end," Affoumado continued. "I don't know where it came from. He was an incredibly strong, determined person."

A memorial service will take place at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, March 6 at St. Francis Xavier Church, at 30 West 3rd Street in Manhattan. Donations in his memory can be made to the Michael Hirsch Memorial Fund, care of the Community Health Project (CHP), 208 West 13th Street, New York, New York 10011. CHP will distribute contributions according to Hirsch's wishes.

Michael Hirsch is survived by his mother, Claudia; his sister Wendy Goldberg and her husband Neil; his brother Jonathan and his wife Marcia; his sister Nancy and her friend Daniel Vitzman; and by many friends and colleagues. □

## Thomas Stehling dies of AIDS

By Reed Woodhouse

BOSTON — Thomas Stehling of Boston, a former member of the Wellesley College English Department, and a manager of international technical communications at Atex, Inc., died at his home in the South End Feb. 11 after a long battle with AIDS. He was 42.

Tom was educated at Georgetown University, where he was also Commodore of the sailing team and editor of the literary magazine. After graduating in 1968 he began doctoral studies at the University of California at Berkeley, concentrating in medieval literature. He received his Ph.D. in 1977 and accepted a position as Assistant Professor of English at Wellesley, a job he held until 1983.

After studies at the NYU Graduate School of Business Tom joined Atex, Inc., which specializes in computer programs for newspapers. In addition to writing user-manuals for clients, he was in charge of arranging meetings with Atex affiliates in Europe. He left Atex, because of failing health, in early 1987.

During the last two years of his life, Tom was active as a member of the Boston AIDS Action Committee's (AAC) speakers' bureau. Since October of 1988 he was a member of the AAC Board. In December 1988, when he was already gravely ill, Tom gave an eloquent address on AIDS at the Modern Language Association's annual meeting in New Orleans.

Tom's gallantry, kindness, enthusiasm and wit won him many friends. He is survived not only by his family — his mother Mary Stehling, sister Mary Kemps, and niece Louisa — but by his dear companions Reed Woodhouse, Richard Pillard, Jon Guttmacher, Randy Chapman, Seth Kimmelman, David Hendricks, Albert Oliver, Frank Phillip and Harlen Lane, all of Boston.

A memorial service is being planned for early spring. Contributions in Tom's name can be made to Boston's AIDS Action Committee, 131 Clarendon St., Boston, MA, 02116. □

## Afloat

Continued from page 1

have formed AIDS support groups and provide the space for community fundraisers," he said.

The gay bar scene in Washington is not always welcoming for Black gay men, said Harvey. "Four years ago I would have stood up and criticized the bars for their carding policies and for the way they treated Black gay men. Now it's more a matter of

differences. Not many Black men frequent Dupont Circle [a largely white gay male neighborhood] bars, for example, because the music and culture is not Black. There is no longer a conscious effort to divide or segregate, but that's the end result.... In a city that is 75 percent Black, there are a lot of Black gay men that need a place to go."

*The Clubhouse, located at 1296 Upshur St. N.W., is open from 1:00-8:00 a.m. every Saturday night and can be reached at (202) 882-7616.*

□ filed from Boston



“Community Voices” and “Speaking Out” are parts of our efforts to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed in this space. We welcome all contributions except personal attacks. Copies of letters and “Speaking Out” contributions sent elsewhere are printed on a space-available basis. GCN reserves the right to edit letters and “Speaking Out” contributions for length and clarity, in consultation with the author. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership.

Letter and “Speaking Out” contributions must be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Letters can be NO LONGER THAN TWO PAGES. “Speaking Out” contributions can be NO LONGER THAN FOUR PAGES. Send to: Community Voices or Speaking Out, GCN, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

## ‘The Nation’ and AIDS: ignorance, insensitivity and irresponsibility

[Ed. — GCN received a copy of this letter which we print as part of our continuing efforts to promote dialogue about homophobia, heterosexism and the left press.]

To the Editor of the *Nation*:

Darrell Yates Rist’s attack on AIDS activism (“The Deadly Costs of an Obsession,” 13 February, 1989) is a travesty. It mostly consists of arrogant, choleric, unsupported assertions, unencumbered with any account of what is being done or analysis of what could be done. It attacks ACT UP in particular, without quoting a single ACT UP member or mentioning a single fact about ACT UP’s work. I only have space to respond to a few of Rist’s distortions.

1. Rist says, “The homosexual heart for AIDS beats ... only for men of a certain age, a certain color; in fact, a certain class.” Like several other ACT UP/San Francisco members, I live in the Tenderloin. The homeless and hustlers Rist talks about are my neighbors. The 80-odd people who attend ACT UP meetings here mostly have clerical or service jobs or — like many people with AIDS — no jobs. The classes our hearts beat hardest for are the working class and the poor. ACT UP has fought for the rights of prisoners in jail, prostitutes (gay and straight) and IV drug users. We called a coalition together to fight against California’s Proposition 96, a law aimed mainly at poor people and people of color, when other gay groups were ignoring it. ACT UP and Black and Latino groups have worked together to protest attacks on people of color.

2. Rist says, “Gay men who’ve wanted more than sex and obsequious privacy ... [have] been largely shouted down by the politics of this epidemic.” I’ve been active in the lesbian/gay movement for over a decade: I’ve never seen a stronger multi-issue perspective among gays than ACT UP puts forward. ACT NOW, the national network of ACT UP groups, calls for free, nationalized health care for everyone, definitely a radical demand in the U.S. today. In San Francisco we’ve allied with the United Farm Workers in their fight against carcinogenic pesticides. We’ve discussed the links between AIDS and abortion rights. We see our enemy as powerful corporations and the government bureaucracy they control. Is Rist ignorant of all this or just oblivious?

3. Rist says, “The ruse that confronts us is that the fight against AIDS and the struggle for gay rights are the same.” On the contrary, the fight against AIDS unites gays with other communities. With the rate of new infections among gay men now close to zero, the population with AIDS will consist less of gay men and more of current and former IV drug users and their partners: disproportionately poor, disproportionately people of color, more and more women, more and more children. In New York these people are the majority of people with AIDS. ACT UP groups don’t yet represent them adequately. But lesbians and gays in ACT UP began building a movement to defend their lives — and challenge prejudice in their communities — when no one else would do it.

4. Rist says that AIDS activists at the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights “fretted over the possibility that the event would become a political embarrass-

ment.” In fact, ACT NOW was born at that march. In most cities besides New York, ACT UP was founded out of that march. In many cities the people who organized the march and the people who organized ACT UP when they got back home were the same people. AIDS provided the driving impetus for the march, and the march in turn put together a progressive agenda, mobilized hundreds of thousands of people behind it and launched the direct action AIDS movement.

5. Rist says that ACT UP pronounces “universal death on the gay community.” If there is one message that ACT UP has hammered at for the last year and a half, it is that people with AIDS, people with ARC and HIV-positive people do *not* have to die. With new drugs and new treatments now available to keep people alive, what stands between thousands of people and survival is not a virus but government obstruction and corporate greed. This was the message of ACT NOW’s biggest, most successful action to date: shutting down the Food and Drug Administration last fall. Did Rist hear about it?

6. Rist says, “A certain interest in AIDS has become the trendy code for suggesting one’s homosexuality without declaring it.” AIDS has actually brought more gay people out of the closet and into politics than any fight since Stonewall. ACT UP actions are unashamedly, flamboyantly gay. Many people take part in them who have not taken part in political action before. Obviously, people do not understand the movement’s full, radical implications the day they join it. They join because their friends are dying and their own lives are threatened. *Then* they become radical as they learn from experience how the threat can be fought and defeated. This is how progressive movements grow and move leftward in real life — not from taking up an agenda put forward by one disgruntled writer.

As for the *Nation*: your choice to publish this article shows an appalling depth of ignorance, insensitivity and irresponsibility. When Elizabeth Pochada apologized in *Gay Community News* for publishing Robert Sherrill’s homophobic article on Roy Cohn, I thought you might be learning. You have not learned. You still use shallow sensationalism as a substitute for substantive lesbian/gay coverage. Knowing the direct action AIDS movement, I expect your education will now take place publicly and loudly. I’m afraid you deserve all the trouble you are about to get. I hope you emerge from it chastened and wiser.

■ Peter Drucker  
San Francisco, Calif.

## ‘Rainbow Troupe’ banned

Dear *GCN*:

Thank you for your recent missive and for the many years you have shared information. You requested a ‘slice of life’ from my imprisonment by these masters of unreason. As I enter into my 9th year I can tell you I’m tired. Although the names and faces change, I continue to see senseless abuse and it saddens me. Years ago the abuse was purely physical (I’ve had my share of beatings), but the government has now learned how to attack us mentally.

One such example is that a group of approx. 100 women from all walks of life (privately I called them the “Rainbow Troupe”) got together to form a drama group to stage an adaptation of *The Wiz*. Many of the women had neither a high school education nor a very high self-esteem of themselves. During rehearsals the shining eyes and smiles were incredible; even the smallest of tasks such as preparing costumes and backdrops, etc. were met with the greatest of enthusiasm. All this sounds great, huh? It was! For once these women weren’t walking around in a daze or getting into trouble. For six months they were involved! They sweated and pooled/discovered hidden talents that would have been the envy of any top Broadway or Hollywood producer.

But instead of the administration promoting/helping, as usual they continually fed their negativity into the project: ‘How can so many women work so well together; something has to be wrong!’ ‘Some of the women involved are gay, oh my!’ ‘Nothing can possibly work, inmates are stupid and lazy!’ On and on it went until one day the administration trumped up charges against the staff sponsor (a female case manager) and one of the inmate crew. ‘They just have to be having an affair!’ Needless to say, the

**Gay Community News** is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in “editorials” represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

**The GCN Collective** in alphabetical order by primary title/function (\*indicates member of paid staff collective):

### ADVERTISING

Display: Wickie Stamps\*

Classified: Kathleen Walker

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AIDS

Michael Bronksi, Nancy De Luca, Shelley Mains, Jennie McKnight, Elizabeth Pincus, Stephanie Poggi

### ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE

Art Cohen, Stephanie Poggi, Gordon Gottlieb, Marc Stein

### ART/PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

Art Director: Liz Galst\*

Illustrators/Layout: Alison Bechdel, Jim Fauntleroy, Fred Gorman, Natalie Diffloth, Jean Vallon, Ann Strasbourg  
Proofreaders: Jan Fielding, Gordon Gottlieb, Rob Krikorian, John O’Brien, Read Weaver

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stephanie Borns, Mary Eich, Jim Fauntleroy, Mike Friedman, Fred Gorman, Catharine Reid, Julie Rioux

### CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

Coordinators: Chris Bull\*, Judy Harris\*

Data Entry: John Jones, Whitt Pond, Marc Renaud, Paul Schierenbeck

Staff: Paul Amato, Janna Bremer, Barnaby Fisher, Paul Graves, David Hamburger, David Hunt, Larry Hitt, Ronn Jackson, Carl Mann, William Newton, Mark O’Malley, Warren Patterson, Gilbert Roy, Jr., Mary Russel, Bill Sweet

### COMPUTER COMMITTEE

Mark Curby, Steve Dyer, Art Cohen, Dan Page, Troy Richardson, Paul Schierenbeck

### COORDINATING EDITOR

Marc Stein\*

### DISTRIBUTION

Boston area: Gloria’s Trucking

Bulk Distribution & Pizza Sustainer: Ray Hopkins

New York Distribution: Ubiquity Distribution, 1050 East 4th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11230, (718) 789-3137.

### FEATURES DEPARTMENT

Editrix: Stephanie Poggi\*

Assistant: Michael Bronksi

Calendar Coordinator: Erik Moore

Staff: Gerardo Maria Cabrera, Siong-huat Chua, Cheryl Clarke, Susie Day, Carrie Dearborn, Paul Dixon, Jim Fauntleroy, Liz Galst, Amy Gluckman, Larry Goldsmith, Jewelle Gomez, Diane Hamer, Craig Harris, Don Hill, Monica Hileman, Ellen Herman, Margaret Hunt, Janice Irvine, Isaac Jackson, Terri Jewell, Miranda Kolbe, Bill Kreidler, John Kyper, Robin Lippincott, Jack Lo, Shelley Mains, E. G. Martin, Mara Math, Duncan Mitchel, Pam Mitchell, Marea Murray, Jon David Nalley, Vanessa Nemeth, Ana Ortiz, Cindy Patton, William A. Percy, Elizabeth Pincus, Veneita Porter, Colin Robinson, Patricia A. Roth, Charley Shively, Tatianna Schriber, Donald Stone, Maida Tilchen, Tim Walton

### INDEXER

Charles Ash

### NEWS DEPARTMENT

Editrix: Jennie McKnight\*

Reporters: Chris Bull\*, Judy Harns\*

Staff: Michael Botkin, Scott Brookie, Betsy Brown, Joe Cice, Nancy DeLuca, John Dooley, Jennifer Fechner, Caroline Foty, Mike Friedman, Chris Guilfooy, Craig Harris, Marty Heggstad, John Hubert, Stephen Hunt, Jud Kempson, Lori Kenschaft, Miranda Kolbe, John Kyper, Kendall Lovett, Andrew Miller, Glenn Sitzmann, Denise Sudell, Don Verfaillie, Paul-David Wadler, Nancy Wechsler, Rex Wockner, Diana Woodall, John Zeh

### OFFICE MANAGER/PRISONER PROJECT

Mike Riegle\*

Prisoner Project Staff: Natalie Diffloth, Tiyo Attallah Salah-El, Richard Tremblay

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Michael Bronski, Fred Gorman, Stephanie Poggi, Catharine Reid, Marc Stein, Nancy Wechsler

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Susan Bernstein, Darlene, Susan Fleischmann, Marilyn Humphries, Patsy Lynch, Debbie Rich, RINK, Lisa Sette, Ellen Shub, Lee Snider, Laura Wulf

### PROMOTIONS DEPARTMENT

Coordinator: Kathleen Walker\*

Interim Microfilm Promoter: Donald Stone

### SUSTAINER COMMITTEE

Steve Dyer, Gordon Gottlieb, Shelley Mains, Marc Stein, Nancy Wechsler

### TYPOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

GCN Typesetter/Features writer: Christopher Wittke\*

Outside Typesetting Coordinator: Regina

Staff: Ann Fry, Amy Lustig, Pam Mitchell, Tim Walton, Nancy Wechsler

©1988, Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, Inc., all rights reserved. Reprint by permission only.

**Gay Community News** is published weekly (except the last week of April, August and December), by the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Our office is located at 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 426-4469, TTY/TDD 426-0332.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Mass. Annual subscription rate is \$33. Institutional rate: \$40. ISSN: [0147-0728]. Member Gay and Lesbian Press Association, New England Press Association, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, COSMEP member.

**GCN** is included in the Alternative Press Index, published quarterly by the Alternative Press Center, Inc., Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Volumes I-15 of **GCN** are available on microfilm for \$40/volume, \$550/complete set. Write **GCN**/Microfilm for more information.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: **Gay Community News**, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

# SEX. POLITICS.

**hindsights**  
By Elizabeth Pincus

## Lesbian thirst

A dazzling new dyke porn video



**hindsights**  
By Michael Bronski



## Death, AIDS transfiguration

Thought on the sexual

## the grief

arning

gay  
COMMUNITY  
NEWS

“GCN consistently covers the intersection of sex & politics which is often the location of our troubles & our joys — both individually & collectively. GCN is simply the most interesting publication for lesbians & gay men in this country.” — Sue Hyde

**Sodomy Law Repeal Project  
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force**

## SUSTAIN GCN!

Join the growing number of GCN SUSTAINERS who donate \$10 — \$500 per month to support the paper — and get a free sub, our in-house newsletter, & an invite to our yearly sustainer party. GCN is published by a non-profit, tax-exempt educational foundation.

## SUBSCRIBE & save up to 33%!

☐ 1 year (49 issues), \$33 ☐ 6 months, \$20  
☐ 6 months, low income, \$12 ☐ I am donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward a subscription for a lesbian or gay prisoner.

Institutions: \$40. Foreign, including Canada: \$50

Mail to: **GCN Subscriptions**, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.



case manager was put under investigation and the inmate was placed in the 'hole.'

A sick sort of witch hunt had been in process all year anyway. Alderson underwent a massive change from an all-level to a minimum-security camp-style facility. The close friendships seemed to be the first targeted for shipment/separation. That continues even today. The crowning glory was a memo put out in mid-December: 'No hand holding allowed!' Even the most innocent act is subject to their debased, narrow-minded, petty homophobia.

Anyway, the saga over *The Wiz* ended by the inmate and the staff being found 'not guilty' of having an affair. Many 'informal' sanctions were imposed though and to this day they aren't allowed to speak to each other. Unfortunately the spark and self-esteem is gone; hence, more tension and nonsense. I was personally involved in this project and it's a damn shame to see such solidarity die. But that's how they work: divide and conquer.

It will be interesting to see how much longer they allow your paper to come in here. Although I understand the so-called 'gay rights' I have, I refuse to even acknowledge their prejudiced acts with the filing of suits anymore. Like I said, I'm tired. I am not ashamed of who or what I am as the dawn has never been beyond my reach and one day I can only hope they realize they are wrong in limiting people with their narrow minded power. I refuse to deny my existence and am glad someone like you is there to tell the world of these atrocious acts. I wish I could help more (even change the world) but rather than the idealistic attitude I felt 10 years ago, I feel that by totally ignoring their gay-baiting I can survive. Their puritanical world has to be miserable and I feel sorry for them. They have to awake each new day with their insecure, petty thoughts staring them in the face. Whether in prison or freedom I can awake proud to be who I am, regardless of their 'rules and standards.'

Please continue in your struggles because with all your efforts for us inside, you make it so much easier to be ourselves.

Sincerely,  
Fonda Holmes  
Alderson, W. Va.

## Somewhere else over the rainbow

Dear GCN:

At this time, I would like to express my concern over the loss, due to fire and water damage, of our only Lesbian entertainment spot in the City of Boston. Unfortunately, "Somewhere Else" was our only all-Lesbian oasis. For me, it was a place to be with my sisters, my family. "Somewhere Else" was and is an important meeting place for us, a quiet club, with a regular clientele, that maintained its quiet spot, tucked away in the financial district in Boston, until a fire of suspicious origin wiped it out recently. Hopefully, a full investigation is in the process.

"Somewhere Else," the staff and my friends here, have been supportive of me when I needed them, and I would very much like to see our club opened again very soon. It is a special asset to our community. I am sure that there are hundreds of us who have had the experience of being at "Somewhere Else," and will testify to this.

At this time, I would like to have many of us who have enjoyed "Somewhere Else" pull together and offer our full support, in whatever way is necessary, to help Linda Sears and Debbie Lochiatto re-open our club soon. It's our turn! Hopefully our help will be accepted, and we can work together with our skills and talents, as soon as Linda and Debbie are ready.

I hope sisters reading this letter will come forward with offers of help. Also, I would like Linda and/or Debbie to contact me with regard to this matter since I do not know of a way to get in touch with them.

I may be reached any time at 617/868-8521. Please leave messages on my machine if I am not at home.

Sincerely,  
Linda Hemenway  
Cambridge, Mass.

# Independence for Puerto Rico . . . a burning issue?

By Glenn Sitzman

People in [the midst of] controversy try to put their own case in the best light, and people with an axe to grind slant things to their own ends. *GCN* is a case in point. For example, when some 350,000 registered voters in Puerto Rico petitioned Congress to make Puerto Rico the 51st state, that was not news. But when one radical lesbian talked to 1,000 people in the United States about independence for Puerto Rico...well, now, *that* was news, and *GCN* printed it, though it is doubtful how many of the 1001 ever set foot on the island.

More recently, in Issue 25 (Jan. 8-14, 1989) Jennie McKnight wrote that three lesbian prisoners "have acted in support of Puerto Rican independence and Black liberation." To put "Puerto Rican independence and Black liberation" in the same sentence is absurd. Black liberation always was and still is a real and major issue. Independence for Puerto Rico is an issue, but not in the way that Jennie McKnight's three radical lesbians would have it. It is absurd to be "fighting" for independence for a people who do not want to be independent.

Status, not independence, is the vital issue in Puerto Rico. Independence is an issue with some Puerto Ricans on the island, but as an issue it should be seen in perspective. That is why I am writing, so that *GCN* readers who prefer a balanced presentation of the news can see for at least one time what the real issues are in Puerto Rico. The issues are more involved and complex than I can deal with in this short piece, but here we have the gist of the matter.

The volatile issue of status on the island seethes around these options, each advocated by one of the three major political parties: the New Progressive Party (NPP), the Popular Democratic Party (PDP) and the Pro-Independence Party (PIP).

At the present time, the Popular Democratic Party is in power, with the New

Progressive and Pro-Independence Parties in opposition. As its name suggests, the PIP advocates independence for Puerto Rico, but — and *GCN* readers should note this — it *disavows* the use of violence to achieve that end. The PDP advocates a continuation of the present "Commonwealth in Free Association with the United States," but with some changes that have not yet been clarified for the other parties. The NPP advocates statehood and has worked very hard toward the end within recent years.

The PIP is the smallest party. Other smaller and more radical parties, such as the Socialist and Communist Parties, vote with the PIP in island-wide elections. Together, they produce an aggregate of about seven percent of the votes cast. Some of the smaller, more radical parties, *do* advocate violence in their efforts to bring Puerto Rico to a status of independence. The remaining 93 percent of the votes are divided fairly evenly between the NPP and the PDP, with those two alternating in power.

Pundits say that many PIP members vote with the PDP on critical issues, such as [the elections for] governor and mayor of San Juan, in order to defeat the NPP. It should be fairly apparent why PIP members might vote for what they consider the lesser of two evils. Judging by past elections, the PIP has no chance of ever leading Puerto Rico to independence; but so long as they can avoid statehood, they can still dream of independence.

In the 1988 election, Governor Rafael Hernandez Colon (PDP) won reelection with some 860,000 votes (48 percent). Baltasar Corrada del Rio (NPP) lost with some 815,000 votes (45 percent), and Ruben Berrios (PIP) lost with some 100,000 votes. The PDP won 36 seats in the House of Representatives, NPP 14, and PIP one. Under Puerto Rican law, when one party wins more than two-thirds of house seats, the Electoral Commission may add seats for

the minority party/parties to bring the number of minority seats to 17. Thus, in the new legislature, though the seat awarded to PIP is being litigated by NPP, the present count of seats in the House is PDP 36, NPP 15, and PIP 2.

In his inaugural address on January 2, 1989, Governor Hernandez Colon announced that he will hold a plebiscite during his present term to resolve the status question. He has since met with the presidents of the PDP and PIP (Corrada del Rio and Berrios, respectively), and the three have agreed to present a united front in a letter petitioning Congress to enact legislation to make the outcome of the plebiscite the permanent solution to the status problem. Success with Congress is doubtful, but the three party presidents have taken public stands in favor of a plebiscite to end the uncertainty concerning status. Governor Hernandez Colon now wants to hold the plebiscite within two years, to avoid having it mixed up in the fervor of the next gubernatorial election.

Puerto Ricans take their politics very, very seriously, and a plebiscite on status is bound to create as much emotion as, if not more than, a gubernatorial election. Looking at the present make-up of the political parties on the island, and viewing past elections, one may well doubt that independence has a chance. Even those Commonwealthers who abhor the notion of statehood appear to be tenacious about holding onto their U.S. citizenship, however bad they or others may consider the U.S. government to be. In any case, Puerto Ricans living on the island are competent to arrive at their own decisions without having decisions forced on them by small bands of foreign radicals who have never seen how Puerto Ricans live in Puerto Rico.

*Glenn Sitzman is a gay man who lives in Mayaguez. He is the author of African Libraries, published by Scarecrow Press (Box 4167, Metuchen, N.J. 08840).*

# Honoring community and diversity

By George Ayala

As a gay Puerto Rican man, celebrating Black History Month means uncovering strong alliances we have as lesbian and gay People of Color and discovering our overlapping histories and experiences. I guess this is why being asked to make a contribution to *GCN*'s Black History Month issue feels so important to me.

Celebration is a politically powerful concept, because it represents an opportunity for us to connect with one another. Seeing connections and respecting differences across race, class, gender, religious affiliation, physical and emotional abilities, educational experiences, age, and sexualities is a very potent social change strategy because it broadens our ability as a community to deal with the many issues that affect lesbian and gay People of Color deeply. We are Latino/Latina, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American and Black; we are women and men, lesbian and gay; we are poor, working class, and middle class; we are Catholic, Muslim, Baptist, Buddhist, Jewish and Atheist; we are young, middle-aged and old; we are able-bodied and physically challenged; and we are "fierce." It is within this diversity that we must ground our politics. Sadly, shared celebrations of histories and of diversity — and shared struggles in the face of adversity — do not occur nearly as much as they should.

Our home-people are dying from drugs, AIDS, poverty, homelessness (or "uprootedness"), violence against women, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, and inadequate health and mental health care. "Correctional" facilities and psychiatric institutions are jammed packed with our people. And if lesbian and gay People of Color don't die from one of these common causes of death, an over-entitled, white, off-duty police officer might decide that it is within his right to

practice euthanasia for us.

As a gay Latino with relative educational privileging, born and raised on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and currently living in Perth Amboy, N.J. (one of this country's many barrios), I am concerned with all of the ways my people are dying. All of these are my issues.

It will always feel like we're fighting alone in the many struggles in which we find ourselves, if we are not connecting, if we are not celebrating our diversity and histories as lesbian and gay People of Color.

Despite this very real threat, lesbian and gay People of Color have not yet completely learned to reject anti-diversity, imperialist notions, for our own better judgments. Our histories teach us that lesbian and gay People of Color come from a very long line of warriors, and a long tradition of extended family and communal/community networks. Yet, in-fighting over whose issues are the most important and whose issues are the top priorities continues. And we continue to struggle over the coherent articulation of a strategic politic, one which could finally match the effective rhetoric of the conservative right wing. Our communities are working on a broad range of issues.

As individuals, we cannot fight on all fronts. As part of a coalition-building process, it is necessary for us to work autonomously and collectively. By virtue of our diverse identities and cultures, our needs and issues are different. But whether we are staffing a battered women's shelter, setting up soup kitchens for the homeless, combatting the spread of gentrification programs, fighting for custody of our children, or comforting people with AIDS, we are fighting the same war. What is critical in our work for change is to balance the values of community and diversity. Advocating for autonomous organizing while urging respect

for the values of community requires that we actively engage in the process of uncovering and acknowledging connections. This is what will effectively propel us forward. Hermanos y hermanas, la lucha continua, pero las batallas que peliamos algun dia resultaran en una realisation de nuestra in-creeble vision.

*George Ayala is a graduate student at Rutgers University working on a doctorate degree in clinical and community psychology. He chaired a Latino organization for professional psychology students at Rutgers last year. As an undergraduate he co-founded Gays, Bisexuals and Lesbians of Color at Cornell University.*

**The opinions expressed in Speaking Out are those of the author(s) and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership.**



# U.S. Adult/Adolescent AIDS Cases as of January 30, 1989

Transmission Categories	White Number (%)	Black Number (%)	Hispanic Number (%)	Asian/ Pacific Islander Number (%)	American Indian/ Alaskan Native Number (%)	Male Number (%)	Female Number (%)	Total
Homosexual/ Bisexual Male	37,602 (78)	8,150 (37)	5,303 (42)	371 (75)	47 (53)	51,581 (68)		51,581 (62)
Intravenous (IV) Drug Abuser	3,302 ( 7)	8,366 (38)	4,932 (39)	18 ( 4)	14 (16)	12,929 (17)	3,743 (52)	16,672 (20)
Homosexual Male and IV Drug Abuser	3,606 ( 7)	1,507 ( 7)	872 ( 7)	8 ( 2)	13 (15)	6,013 ( 8)		6,013 ( 7)
Hemophilic/ Coagulation Disorder	670 ( 1)	52 ( 0)	59 ( 0)	10 ( 2)	3 ( 3)	775 ( 1)	23 ( 0)	798 ( 1)
Heterosexual cases	713 ( 1)	2,386 (11)	562 ( 4)	15 ( 3)	3 ( 3)	1,555 ( 2)	2,130 (30)	3,685 ( 4)
Transfusion, Blood/Components	1,528 ( 3)	330 ( 2)	173 ( 1)	42 ( 8)	3 ( 3)	1,319 ( 2)	762 (11)	2,081 ( 2)
Undetermined	1,052 ( 2)	1,060 ( 5)	596 ( 5)	32 ( 6)	5 ( 6)	2,223 ( 3)	539 ( 7)	2,762 ( 3)
Subtotal [% of all cases]	48,473 [58]	21,851 [26]	12,497 [15]	496 [1]	88 [0]	76,395 [91]	7,197 [9]	83,592 [100]

Total number of AIDS-related deaths, including children: 47,817

The most timely and comprehensive statistical data about AIDS come from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which issue weekly reports. But this information, though seemingly "objective" numerical data, is both limited and biased.

The CDC, based in Atlanta, compile national statistics on AIDS (comparable data is not published for AIDS Related Complex — ARC) based on reports from state health departments and physicians. Standard diagnostic forms are completed by physicians when they diagnose a case and these are sent to state departments of health or the CDC.

The CDC numbers do not account for all people who have AIDS in the U.S. Not all physicians are adequately trained to make an AIDS diagnosis, so many people who have AIDS continue to be misdiagnosed. In addition, some doctors who are motivated to protect their patients from the stigma attached to AIDS (sometimes by patients themselves, or their families) may be reluctant to report an AIDS diagnosis. In addition, many people who lack access to adequate medical care — poor people, people of color, IV drug users, prisoners, teenagers and women — will not come in contact with the people who do the reporting and will be misrepresented in the statistics. Prisons, for example, are notorious for their failure to recognize and report cases of AIDS.

It is also important to examine how the presentation of the CDC numbers is distorted. The categories listed in the CDC table inaccurately represent data about transmission. By presenting risk groups (primarily gay/bisexual men and IV drug users) under "transmission categories," the data tells us little about which high-risk activities are associated with the spread of AIDS and perpetuates the myth that certain kinds of people are inherently carriers of the disease.

For a more detailed analysis of the CDC's statistics, see the centerspread in **GCN**, Vol. 15, No. 40. We welcome your input about the CDC numbers we print and suggestions about statistical information you would like to see. □

## Trials

Continued from page 3

"based on scientific experience, not in consultation with any AIDS activists."

Several physicians at the AAAS symposium expressed skepticism that such a large-scale study could maintain contact with its patients. For example, in a recent study of people with AIDS who sought help in clinics designed for low-income groups, researchers lost touch with nearly 20 percent of the subjects within 11 months, says Dr. David W. Barry, vice president of research at Burroughs-Wellcome. That dropout rate remained high despite a substantial effort on the part of researchers to recontact the study's participants, according to Barry. Nevertheless, participants at the symposium gave Zelen's proposal an enthusiastic review and expressed hope that a pilot project could be started quickly. □

## Smut

Continued from page 1

the closing of the St. Mark's Baths was unsuccessful, Wheatley pointed out. "The anti-sex culture, combined with a health threat posed by a sexually transmitted disease, doesn't provide us much hope to uphold sexual privacy, especially in the post-Hardwick era."

□ filed from Boston

## Testing

Continued from back page

several months, primarily, I think now, because of my fears about AIDS. I felt immobilized by uncertainty, and I just felt like I needed to know. Setting up the appointment helped me become more conscious of my fears and desires. Several days before my test, I started having sex again, realized that there were other ways to deal with my fears about AIDS, and decided that I didn't want to be tested.

My provider at Fenway listened to me, and raised an argument I first learned about preparing for my roundtable discussion. Proponents of this position argue that now promising treatments (such as AZT, aerosolized pentaridine and gancyclovir and others — some potentially preventative for AIDS, its related diseases, and HIV infection), are becoming more available. They say it therefore doesn't make sense to choose not to test. This position is based on the idea that the earlier one knows one's

positive status, the earlier one can begin medical treatments or alternative health practices.

Based I think on a growing acceptance of this idea within our community, I have witnessed a dramatic change in my own Boston circles: more and more people are quietly choosing to be tested.

I trust most friends' decisions on testing, and I think their choices make sense in many cases.

But what I want to argue here is that, despite advances in immune system enhancement and disease prevention and treatment, the objections to testing — as an individual choice and as a public health approach — raised above remain. We still do not have civil rights protections. We still lack adequate support systems and services. And we remain in danger of having our community divided — sexually, socially and politically — by widespread testing. How can we ensure that we will continue growing sexually and finding community with other lesbians and gay men, regardless of HIV antibody status and AIDS diagnosis?

The challenge then, as we continue to live with AIDS, is to work hard on civil rights/anti-discrimination legislation, support services and systems, and community solidarity. Some of this depends on work we can do within our own communities; much also depends on struggling against homophobia, AIDS-phobia and other forces that work against our communities. What the politics of testing demonstrates clearly is the need for developing community strategies and resistance to fight AIDS and work toward liberation. □

JOHN GRAVES  
Ph.D

14 Years of Gay Affirmative  
Counseling for the  
Community



Phone  
(617)  
266-2069

42 THE FENWAY  
BOSTON, MA 02215

ARADIA

COUNSELING  
FOR WOMEN  
Individual, Couple  
and Group  
Counseling



Call 247-4861

Sliding Scale Fee  
Health Insurance  
Accepted

520 Commonwealth Avenue  
Kenmore Square

## Co-dependent Women from Alcoholic Families

New Therapy Group

A safe, supportive space to examine the self, express feelings, and recover from addictive patterns that interfere with genuine expression of our precious child within.

Prefer daytime, 6 months

Sliding scale and insurance accepted.

Julia Kelly, M.Ed.

648-9404

Debra Truskinoff, LICSW  
484-1553

Agoraphobia Services  
anxiety • phobias • stress

Dr. Laurie Livingston  
Licensed Psychologist

720 Washington Street  
Nantucket Building  
Hanover, MA 02339  
(617) 826-2466

1141 Beacon Street  
Suite 1  
Brookline, MA 02146  
(617) 734-5779

Red Shades  
presents

## BORN IN FLAMES



a feminist sci-fi  
film  
by Lizzie Borden

\$5.00 at the door

Benefit for CoMadres  
(Committee of Mothers of the  
Disappeared in El Salvador)

Friday, March 10  
Jamaica Plain High School  
Washington & McBride  
Jamaica Plain  
Green Street T Stop

## Volunteer

Proof-readers News Note  
writers Envelope stuffers  
Fundraisers Graphic  
artists Journalists  
Illustrators Essayists  
Typesetters Prisoner  
support Paste-up  
people Book reviewers  
Photographers  
Cartoonists  
Computer jocks Typists

at  
GCN

Call 426-4469



Minerva  
Graphics

491-4110

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
TYPESETTING  
PRINTING

10 Magazine Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

(Magazine and Green Streets, Central Square)

"Take two crystals  
and call me  
in the morning."

— New Age Blues

ALIVE  
WITH  
AIDS

A Musical Exploration

Don't miss this exciting new musical  
theatre production, based on New  
England's experiences with AIDS. This  
production was developed in The Living  
With AIDS Theatre Project workshop.

February 23 thru April 2

Curtain on Wed., Thurs. and Fri. at  
8:00 p.m., Sat. at 5:00 & 8:00 p.m.,  
and Sun. at 3:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$16.50, and  
\$18.50 on Fri. & Sat. at 8:00 p.m.

For tickets call 536-0972

Club  
CABARET

209 Columbus Avenue at  
Berkeley Street, Boston

No smoking is appreciated.



# From the Guest Editors

By Phillip Harper and Pam Ellis

This Supplement is a coalition effort, representing the labors of a range of people with diverse perspectives and a common interest in the history of Black people — and of all people of color — in the United States. The variety of approaches to African American culture that is presented here goes some way toward indicating the diversity of the Black community in general and of Black lesbian and gay communities in particular.

The range of topics covered itself is quite broad, from Cheryl Clarke's piece on the historical contributions of Black lesbians and gays in the U.S. to the erotic haiku of Alan E. Miller. The scope of interests of Supplement contributors was never in doubt; the major task in the production of the Supplement lay in coordinating the contributions into a coherent whole.

As is always the case in lesbian and gay organizing, the limitations of this project did not have to do with lack of enthusiasm, but rather with the overtaxing of human resources. Those of us who came together at the end of last year to plan for this issue were already deeply involved in various other projects in the community, and were therefore sensitive to the degree of coordination that would be necessary to make our efforts bear fruit. The two of us (Phil Harper and Pam Ellis), along with Kathy Gainer, Nina Demaia, Denise Simmons and Roger Carter, worked mostly by telephone to connect with the large pool of GCN contributors who had expressed interest in writing for the Supplement. With the extensive support of GCN staffers Marc Stein, Stephanie Poggi and Liz Galst — and with the help of electronic technology and express mail services — we were able to pull together the material you see here with only the normal amount of hassle.

Consequently, the Supplement is graced not only with the haiku of Miller, but also with a piece by Jewelle Gomez on Black women's humor; Cheryl Clarke's analysis is nicely complemented by Beverly Smith's speech on the role of Black women in the reproductive rights movement; Linda Hirsch's interview with Phil Harper and Kenji Oshima emphasizes the need for building coalitions among the various cultural subsets of the community in a way that echoes George Ayala's call for unity among people of color that appears in the "Speaking Out" section of the paper; the politics of Black existence are explicitly addressed in the pieces by John Bush and Kate Rushin on "African American" and other terms used for designating Blacks in the U.S., and by Shelia Melton's article on tokenism in political organizations; the vitality of organizing in the Black lesbian and gay community is attested to in Wendy Scott's look at Niobi Productions; and GCN's tribute to the late Joe Beam continues with a reprint of Joe's own 1985 piece on the politics of love between Black men and with Kate Rushin's appreciation of Beam. The personal, political and cultural experiences of Black lesbians and gay men are represented here in an impressive array.

Which brings us to a final comment on the nature of Black history in the U.S. That history is not merely what has happened in the past; it is, rather, an ongoing process shaped by the experiences of those of us living in the present. It is that expanded view of history that we have tried to bear in mind in producing this Supplement. To the extent that we have succeeded in providing thought-provoking material, we must thank the writers and artists who contributed their work to the collective effort. And insofar as history is an ongoing process, all of us must look forward to repeating this effort, again and again and again. □

## History in the Making: Personal, Political and Cultural Perspectives on Black Lesbian and Gay Life

### Black History Supplement Contents

D.C. Black club stays afloat	Chris Bull	p. 1
Honoring community and diversity	George Ayala	p. 5
Silence and invisibility: costly metaphors	Cheryl Clarke	p. 7
The distinct signature of black women's humor	Jewelle Gomez	p. 7
When the deal goes down, we choose ourselves	Beverly Smith	p. 8
Black Men Loving Black Men	Joseph Beam (reprint)	p. 9
Speaking for ourselves	Kate Rushin	p. 9
Multi-ethnic experience	Shelia Melton	p. 10
Enter Niobi Productions	Wendy Scott	p. 10
Naming ourselves and our community: two viewpoints	John Bush, Kate Rushin	p. 11
Voyages of self-discovery	Linda Hirsch	p. 13
Black Lesbian and Gay Resources	compiled by Liz Galst	p. 14
Black Haiku	Alan Miller	p. 15

GCN thanks Barbara Smith, Angela Bowen and the National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays for their contributions to this Supplement.

We also thank the Boston Women's Fund and the GCN Sustainers (donors who contribute \$120 or more per year) for their generous financial support of this project. □



Jewelle Gomez

## The distinct signature of black women's humor

The way we say "girl" when we're getting ready to tell some gossip

By Jewelle Gomez

Late one summer in 1961, while sitting on the front steps of our pre-gentrified, South End apartment house, my Aunt Henrietta and I heard her sister, up the street, shouting angrily. Aunt H. shooed me into the building before she rushed up the block to Aunt Irene's defense. It turned out that Aunt Irene, on her way home from a night on the town, had challenged two white cops who were roughly handling a young black man. They responded by calling Aunt Irene, who was six feet tall and massively beautiful, a "black bitch," thus provoking her murderous rage.

This volatile confrontation (including drawn police guns) has become, over the years, one of the most hilarious anecdotes told around our family's kitchen table. I

can't really do it justice on paper (Aunt Irene towering and glowering; the cops loud and wrong) because it is her way of telling it that makes it comic to me. So it has been with black women and humor since the beginning of our history in this country. While comic artistry has always been attributed to black men from Langston Hughes to Willie Best to Richard Pryor (sometimes in such extreme proportions that black men were seen as only buffoons) black women, too, have borne the comic heart of our culture. The syrupy way Pearl Bailey said "darlin'" and flicked her wrist, the button-eyed stare Moms Mabley inflicted on a camera were the products of a tradition of ironic reflection and caustic wit that is the

Continued on page 10

## Silence and invisibility: costly metaphors

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask

— Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask," 1913

By Cheryl Clarke

Toni Cade Bambara, writer, activist, and race woman, claims that Afro-Americans have given the world two "abiding metaphors," *silence* and *invisibility*. Black gay men and lesbians are double exemplars of these metaphors. In both the case of Afro-Americans in general and Afro-American lesbians and gays, the choices of silence and invisibility have been made in order to survive or to gain access to privilege in a hostile environment. Though black lesbians and gay men still pay a debt to "human guile" (Dunbar) because of our identities, at least we no longer — in most of the U.S. — have to suppress our black consciousness.

I know that in writing the following pages I am divulging the great secret of my life, the secret which for some years I have guarded far more carefully than any of my earthly possessions.

(James Weldon Johnson, 1912)

If one were asked what "great secret" Johnson is referring to in this passage from his famous novel, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, the response would most likely be "homosexuality." The act or necessity of "passing for white" is almost unheard of today. However, the act of "passing" as heterosexual still reflects much of gay and lesbian life. While the act of "passing" as heterosexual is probably older than the act of "passing for white," the circumstances which cause gay men and lesbians to hide their identities still prevail. Not

that racism has ended, but whiteness is not as compelling an ideal as it once was nor are the penalties for being black as severe or life-threatening — in most of the U.S. — as they once were. The consequences of divulging one's gayness are, in many cases, still severe and punitive. Thus, some people still try to take the *great secret* to the grave, e.g. Rock Hudson, Liberace; or some recant, e.g. Gladys Bentley, Little Richard; or some never claim a gay or lesbian community, e.g. James Baldwin; or some just remain in the closet. Walter White, who was a white-skinned Afro-American, passed for white while investigating lynchings in the South for the NAACP in the 1920s. Thousands of gay and lesbian people pass as straight just to get through the day. Black lesbians and gay men pass as straight in both the white and black communities.

Invisibility may be defined as the ability or will of the power group not to acknowledge the presence or influence of another group. Being invisible as a black person runs the gamut from the daily experience of entering a room full of white people and not being acknowledged to the other extreme of erasure from history. Where would Mick Jagger or David Bowie be without Little Richard? (Or even James Brown or Michael Jackson for that matter?) Silence may be defined as the act of subordinating the expression of one's needs to the will of the group in power. Sometimes the silence is strategic, as was Walter White's. Many times, it is a suppression of one's beliefs to accommodate what one has been told is the "greater good," the *this-now-and-that-later* philosophy. Many gay and lesbian people succumb to the oppression-ranking syndrome in groups whose politics are not anti-sexist, anti-heterosexist, or anti-hierarchical. We spend our lives, as gay and lesbian people, calculating the costs of silence.

Indeed, most of Afro-American literature reflects the struggle to be recognized, the

Continued on page 8



# 'It's very hard for women to say that when the deal goes down, we choose ourselves'

*Beverly Smith on Black women and abortion rights, remembering the days before abortion was legal, the semantics of the movement*

The following is an edited version of a speech given by Beverly Smith at a community forum held on January 22, 1989, the 16th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion. Organized by the Reproductive Rights Network of Boston and the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, the conference was designed to give reproductive rights activists and supporters a chance to strategize against the growing attacks on abortion rights.

By Beverly Smith

I was asked to try and reflect on what this issue of abortion means for Black women and how we can get Black women involved in organizing. I'm not casting any aspersions at all, but I'd like to take the opportunity to speak not just as a Black woman, but as all the things that I am, which is definitely a feminist and a health feminist who's been involved in this struggle for many, many years.

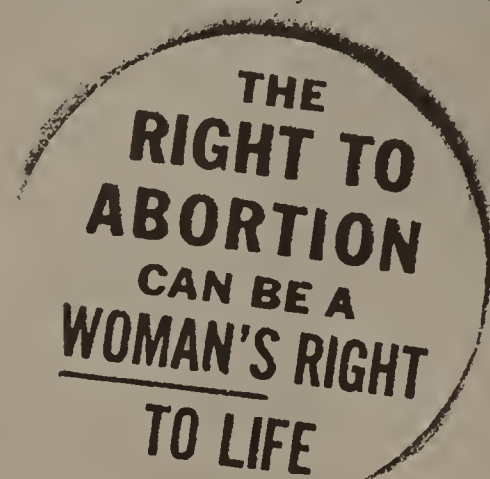
So, one of the things I want to talk about is what it was like before abortion was legal, because I think there may be some people here who don't have a clue about that. For example, last night I was having dinner with some friends, two men in fact, and my sister and I were recounting the history of the development of battered women's shelters in Boston and we were talking about the time when there was no shelter. I was doing family planning counselling at Boston City Hospital and had a battered woman who was Spanish-speaking come in with cigarette burns and I had nowhere to send her. Nowhere, because there was no shelter. And my friends said they thought there were always things like shelters. So I want to return to the days of yesteryear for a moment because I think that's where the passion of many of us comes from.

This story is about my first day at college. I had a roommate who was another Black woman. And I remember, here we were, nervous and anxious out of our minds. We went down to the basement to look for our trunks, and my new roommate, who I had just met hours before, started throwing up. She claimed that she was nervous and later told me that she wasn't going to be able to finish out the year. I couldn't quite figure it out. Let me assure you, in 1965 I was quite an innocent. So I don't know how this popped into my mind but I said, the girl is pregnant. A few weeks later, she stayed out all night in violation of the rules that we had at that time. Then she came back and said she would be finishing out the year. So I believe she had an illegal abortion. This was in Chicago. I could have lost a roommate.

Now, of course, she never, ever told me what was going on. She never said that she was pregnant, she never said that she'd had an abortion. One of the most telling things she said — and this gets to the shame of all

affects the quality of our lives, and of course, in some instances, affects whether we have any life at all. I'm talking, of course, about death from illegal abortion. There are lots of reasons why we've never asserted this argument. One is that it goes directly against our sexist role conditioning. It's very hard for women to say that when the deal goes down, we choose ourselves. This may mean choosing not to have a baby.

When I wrote that phrase — choosing ourselves, rather than choosing to have a baby — it gave me some insight about the question of why there's been such strong lesbian involvement in the reproductive rights movement. I think it may be because this



struggle has to do with giving our love to women. I think so many lesbians work on abortion because we deeply value women's lives, all women's lives, and know in our guts and in our hearts that women need access to abortion in order to have any kind of life at all.

I want to make some comments about the semantics of the abortion struggle and then I want to say a few things about Black women



and abortion. It occurred to me this morning that what the anti-abortion people mean by life and what I mean by life are two very different things. Life for them is mostly a biological phenomenon. They don't care about the quality of life for those babies and their mothers, who for many valid reasons don't want a child or feel that they can't have a child, no matter how much they might want to have one. What I think we're fighting for is decent standards of life, including the potential for growth, for all people, including women.

We're fighting for that throughout the lifespan, not just at certain "sacred moments," as the so-called pro-life people would say. And I think there really needs to be an examination of and a commitment to honest terminology about what we're really fighting for. Because I think the truth is very powerful. If we were able to sit down with women and say, "Look, this is the deal, it's not some highfalutin' constitutional issue, and we're not going to cloak it in those terms," we might actually involve more of the kind of people that we would like in this movement.

On that note, I would like to talk about some of the issues around Black women in the struggle for abortion. This is problematic, although there certainly have been many of us who have been involved. One thing I feel is that the feminist connection to abortion sometimes turns Black women off, particularly because feminism is so closely associated with white, with white women. That's the immediate image.

Somewhat connected with that is religious

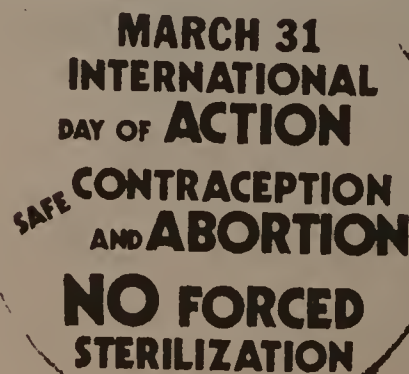
fundamentalism. Because as I often say, you people haven't seen fundamentalism — all these TV evangelists to the contrary — until you have seen Black people be fundamentalists. That's not the only tradition of the Black church, at all, but some of us have been fundamentalists since the 19th century and "born-again"; you know, I heard that phrase long before it was picked up by the media. I think religious fundamentalism is something we have to grapple with because when you're talking about people who are still very involved in the church, abortion is a very difficult issue to try and raise.

Now we get to the fear of genocide. Last year I finally came to the conclusion that, yes indeed, genocide is a real possibility. Now, of course, there has been a genocidal way of life in this country since we got here as slaves, but there's something about doing AIDS work and my sense that Black peoples' number are actually going to go down in the next decade or so that make me think about genocide in a whole different way. But genocide has always been the fear of Black people, particularly around contraception, birth control pills and abortion.

I have always said that what's genocidal is not being able to control what happens to you. And as people have mentioned, forced sterilization is something that still goes on. The fact that sterilization is paid for or can be paid for through public funding, whereas abortion cannot, is itself a type of force — it's not even so subtle a force. There have been other even more blatant instances. I think with the specter of AIDS what we have to look at is Black women. Black women are 50 percent of the cases of women with AIDS, perhaps more at this point, closely followed by Latinas. When you're talking about women and AIDS, think women of color. Whenever you hear women and AIDS, think women of color. That should be your first image, because that gets lost, I have seen it get lost repeatedly and recently on the part of people who are making policy for us.

We have to be very concerned about women of color being forced to be sterilized or have abortions because they are at high risk or because they are HIV positive. And every woman, even a woman who is HIV positive, has the right to make the decision about whether she is going to have children or not.

Here are a couple of things in conclusion. One is that when we're talking about involving Black women in this movement or any movement, we have to look at where abortion and other health concerns fall in the priorities of Black women, particularly poor Black women. It takes space in your life and control of your life to be able to think about working on preserving a right which you might want to exercise in the future. Do you see how speculative that is? You know, maybe in the future or maybe my daughter.... You see, that's not immediate and what people living on the edge are dealing with are immediate concerns. When ob-



taining food and shelter are your most pressing needs, fighting for abortion or doing political work around any issue is unlikely.

Health in general is not high up on the list of priorities of communities of color at this point. Because you can't really think about health, going to the doctor, let alone all the stuff that has been mashed on us in the last decade or so around wellness, if food and

shelter are literally your priorities.

Another thing that is very important is that movements end up close to where they start in terms of who is involved in them. Let me give you an example. In 1988 I was one of a few women of color involved in working on the Women and AIDS conference in Boston. There was a fair representation of women of color at that conference; I would say about ten percent. But if 70-80 percent of women with AIDS are women of color, that's really skewed. Where were the numbers? Well, there are a lot of explanations, but I think that because the conference really started in the white community, it wasn't able to go that much farther. Later on in the year, we started an organization called the Black Women's Council on AIDS, an all women of color group. And because of where it started, we had a predominantly Black group come out for our forum.

So I think if there was such a thing as a Black women's group in the Black community or in some Black community somewhere that was working on reproductive rights issues, that's where I think you might see some of the participation that you want. I don't know how to bring that about exactly — how can women of color be empowered to work on this issue in their communities? So that's my spiel for today. I did bring visual aids with me. I have buttons from the movement and there's one button I want to quote, because it's from the Third World Women's Committee of the Abortion Action Coalition that formed in 1977. One of our members came up with "The right to abortion can be a woman's right to life," which I always thought was a very profound statement. Thank you. □

## Silence

Continued from page 7

struggle for a voice in a racist culture with genocidal tendencies. Much of our history on this continent has been the struggle to mark our existence — and much of our existence has been marked through the voice, a voice that many times has had to be duplicitous. The slave song was really a signal for escape not a sign of religion. The tales about trickster rabbits weren't children's stories or simply told to entertain white folk but were denunciations of white people. Many people forget that a crucial element of the Black Power movement was the struggle to stop the erasure of black people from history, the struggle to resurrect our heroes, to say "Hey, you know a black person invented the paper bag, the stop light, the filament in the electric light bulb...." And it was during this latter half of the 1960s that many Afro-Americans "came out" as black people, i.e. we articulated a black consciousness and a black agenda wherever we went.

This imposition of invisibility may be a Yankee tendency, as Baldwin seems to suggest in his essay, "Fifth Avenue Uptown:"

None of this is true for the Northerner. Negroes represent nothing to him, except, perhaps, the danger of carnality. He never sees Negroes. Southerners see them all the time. Northerners never think about them, whereas Southerners are never really thinking of anything else. Negroes are, therefore, ignored in the North and are under surveillance in the South, and suffer hideously in both places.

(*Nobody Knows My Name*, 1960)

Afro-Americans created the politics of invisibility long before the publication of Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1953). The white Gay Liberation Movement appropriated this analysis, this way of seeing gay and lesbian oppression as erasure of existence, the understanding that unless gay and lesbian people "came out" publicly in defense of our lives, we would be destroyed. Black lesbians and gay men must re-appropriate this perspective to define our positions and predicaments within the context of the

Continued on page 12



of this, both as a woman and as a Black woman — was that "You can take the girl out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of the girl." That was a pretty intense way to start college, and we never, ever talked about it. When I was thinking of this story, I was thinking about the horrible secrecy that surrounded abortion at that time and how bad that is for the self-esteem and well-being of women.

Related to that secrecy and women's self-esteem is the fact that the movement for reproductive rights has never been successful in putting forth certain arguments. Namely, we have never been willing to say clearly that we support abortion because being able to control our reproduction directly





Joseph Beam

## Speaking for ourselves *In memory of Joe Beam*

By Kate Rushin

It was New Year's Eve when I found out that Joe Beam was dead. I'd just been in New York where I'd seen Ron Milner's *Checkmates* at the end of its Broadway run. During the first week of 1989, my mind careened back and forth from the shock of Joe's death to the shock of the hateful anti-Black Gay message that is such a pivotal part of the play. Even now, a month later, it is difficult for me to tell where my sadness ends and my anger begins, where my anger ends and my sadness begins.

*Checkmates* tells two stories. One is that of an older couple (played by Ruby Dee and Paul Winfield), who have overcome many serious problems in their 40-year marriage. The other story is that of their tenants, a young married couple (played by Denzel Washington and Marsha Jackson) who are floundering under career, financial and emotional pressures.

Sylvester, the young husband, is threatened by the bond between his wife Laura, and Lamont, a Black Gay man who is her best friend and colleague. Syl blames their marital problems on the friendship and sees it as both the evidence and the source of Laura's weaknesses. He accuses Laura of being "their woman" and, at one point, demands: "Who's it going to be...me, or that faggot?" Later in the play, Laura realizes that she is pregnant. In her confusion and despair she confides in Lamont and, with his help, gets an abortion.

The simple-minded and manipulative lie is obvious: Black Gays are destructive to Black families and are agents of genocide in Black communities. But, worse than Syl's (Milner's?) gay-baiting, name-calling and viciousness is this: Lamont, the Black Gay man, never once appears on stage. We never see his face. We never hear his voice. He never speaks for himself.

My mind lurches...

But what about Joe?...

What about Joe Beam?...

I first became acquainted with Joe Beam through his work as the editor of *Black/Out* and I met him briefly when he was in Boston to promote *In The Life: A Black Gay Anthology*. During one of our early phone conversations I was jolted by off-handed refer-

ences he made to job hassles and financial problems. Here was Joe Beam, a published writer, the editor of a book and a magazine, worrying about his phone bill and his restaurant job. Oh, I thought to myself, Joe is out here struggling, too.

For so many Black Lesbians and Gays, our talents and accomplishments don't guarantee us a place on easy street. More often than many would imagine, we find ourselves on a lonely avenue. Lonely because of that peculiar isolation that can occur in the midst of people, activity, appointments, taking care of business and getting things done. It is an isolation that becomes mixed with anger as we must constantly battle and ward off police officers, customs officials, clerks, security guards, supervisors, co-workers, teachers, bank tellers and strangers on the street who use the fact of our skin color as their excuse to deal with us as if we were stupid or dangerous. At the same time we must battle and ward off members of our own families, and extended families, communities and extended communities who use the fact of our Gayness as their excuse to declare that we are "outside children," to pretend that they don't know who we are or where we've come from.

The antidote to this pain, the solution to this isolation lies in our willingness to push through fear, anger and malaise to reach out to each other, to stand together and speak up for ourselves. This is what Joe Beam did for himself and for us. He made a space for Black Gay men where there had not been one before. Joe Beam took the ideas and example of Black Lesbian Feminists such as Audre Lorde to heart, and used what was applicable in his work with Black Gay men. He also showed us how it is possible for Black Gay men and Black Lesbians to work together. It is significant that one of Joe Beam's last public political actions was to join Barbara Smith to present a statement on behalf of Black Lesbian and Black Gay Writers at the Black Writers Conference at Medgar Evers College in the spring of 1988. It's one thing to speak out among strangers, it's one thing to speak out among comrades and allies, it's quite another thing altogether to speak out before family who are not always friends. To say, wait a minute. We

# Black Men Loving Black Men: The Revolutionary Act of the Eighties

*The following essay is reprinted from GCN's "Speaking Out" section, February 1985. It was later revised and included in Beam's essay "Brother to Brother: Words from the Heart," which appeared in In The Life: A Black Gay Anthology, Alyson: Boston, 1986. Joseph Beam died at the age of 33 in December of last year of heart failure attributed to AIDS.*

By Joseph Beam

Black men loving Black men is the revolutionary act of the Eighties.

At 18, David could have been a dancer: legs grown strong from daily walks from his remote neighborhood to downtown in search of employment that would free him from his abusive family situation. David, soft-spoken and articulate, could have been a waiter gliding gracefully among the tables of a three-star restaurant. David could have performed numerous jobs, but lacking the connections that come with age and/or race, the Army seemed a reasonable choice. His grace and demeanor will not be important in Nicaragua.

Earl is always a good time. His appearance at parties, whether it's a smart cocktail sip or basement gig, is mandatory. He wakes with coffee and speed, enjoys three-joint lunches, and chases his bedtime Valium with Johnny Walker Red. None of his friends, of which he has many, suggest that he needs help. His substance abuse is ignored by all.

Stacy is a delirious queen, a concoction of current pop stars, bound electrically in thrift store threads. His sharp and witty tongue can transform the most boring, listless evenings. In private, minus the dangles and

bangles, he appears solemn and pensive, and speaks of the paucity of role models, mentors, and possibilities.

Maurice has a propensity for white men, which is more than preference — it's policy. He dismisses potential Black partners as quickly as he switches off rap music and discredits progressive movements. He consistently votes Republican. At night he dreams of razors cutting away thin slivers of his Black skin.

Bubba and Ray had been lovers for so long that neighbors presumed them to be brothers or widowers. For decades their socializing had been done among an intimate circle of gay couples, so when Ray died Bubba felt he was too old to venture the new gay scene. Occasionally he has visitors, an equally old friend or a much younger cousin or nephew. But mostly he sits, weather permitting, on the front porch where with a can of beer over ice, he silently weaves marvelous tales of "the life" in the Thirties and Forties. Yet there isn't anyone who will listen.

Bobbi, a former drag queen, has plenty of time to write poetry. Gone are his makeup and high heels since he began serving his two-to-five-year sentence. He had not wanted to kick that bouncer's ass; however, he, not unlike the more macho sissies clad in leather and denim, rightfully deserved admittance to that bar. Although he has had no visitors and just a couple of letters, he maintains a sense of humor typified by the title of a recent set of poems: *Where can a decent drag queen get a decent drink?*

Paul is hospitalized with AIDS. The severity of his illness is not known to his family or friends. They cannot know that he is gay; it is his secret and he will expire with it. Living a lie is one thing, but it is quite another to die within its confines.

Ty and Reggie have been lovers since they met in the service seven years ago. They both perform dull and menial jobs for spiteful employers, but plan to help each other through college. Ty will attend first. Their two-room apartment, which is neither fashionably appointed nor in a fashionable neighborhood, is clearly home and a respite from the madness that awaits outside their door. They would never imagine themselves as revolutionaries.

Black men loving Black men is the revolutionary act of the Eighties, not only because Sixties revolutionaries Bobby Seale, Huey Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver dare speak our name; but, because as Black men we were never meant to be together — not as father and son, brother and brother — and certainly not as lovers. At every turn we are pitted, one against the other, as permanent adversaries.

It is no accident that 100 applicants apply for 10 jobs, or that loan programs for higher education are being defunded, or that Black youth perceive the Armed Forces as viable employment. It is not a chance occurrence that the rate of Black male imprisonment remains disproportionately high or that drugs are so easily accessible in Black neighborhoods. We are not meant to be together. If one is fortunate enough to locate a crumb from the table draped in white linen, he scurries away to savor it — alone.

Black men loving Black men is an autonomous agenda for the Eighties, which is not rooted in any particular sexual, political, or class affiliation, but in our mutual survival. The ways in which we manifest that love are as myriad as the issues we must address. Unemployment, substance abuse, self-hatred, and the lack of positive images are but some of the barriers to our loving.

*It is my pain I see reflected in your eyes. Our angers ricochet between us like the bullets we fire in battles which are not our own nor with each other.*

Black men loving Black men is a call to action, an acknowledgement of responsibility. We take care of our own kind when the night grows cold and silent. These days the nights are cold-blooded and the silence echoes with complicity. □

You've taken my blues and gone —  
You sing 'em on Broadway  
And you sing 'em in Hollywood Bowl,  
And you mixed 'em up with symphonies  
And you fixed 'em  
So they don't sound like me.  
Yep, you done taken my blues and gone....

But someday somebody'll  
Stand up and talk about me,  
And write about me —  
Black and beautiful —  
And sing about me,  
And put on plays about me!  
I reckon it'll be  
Me myself!

Yes, it'll be me.

*Langston Hughes' biographer has concluded that he was asexual. However, Hughes' literary executors gave permission for his work to be included in Gay & Lesbian Poetry in Our Time (St. Martin's, 1988). It is interesting to read this poem in light of this additional information. □*



# My black experience is a multi-ethnic experience

By Shelia J. Melton

I feel like a Russian nesting doll. A shiny, lacquered, bulbous, wooden doll. The one my best friend's mother brought for me from her trip to the Soviet Union contains four dolls, each buried inside each other. The heads twist off to reveal perfect replicas, each a little smaller.

I feel like a Russian nesting doll. My womanhood, multi-ethnic heritage, color, and sexual orientation are all stacked inside, fighting for equal expression. Fighting for the right to exist. Sometimes each fight is separate. Sometimes I must confront the enemy on all fronts.

None of the exaggerated attempts to relate to only one part of me will work. For example, I am tired of the over-reaching whites often do in their efforts to "understand" me. It's as though they listen to media stereotypes but don't take the time to stop and listen to an authentic voice. When they see a black face, whites assume they must search frantically for a common point of reference. For example, upon introduction to a white person at a bar, I hear "Oh, you like rap music," or "You must have views on...."

I am always amused to watch eyebrows rise when I mention an article I've read in *U.S. News and World Report* or *Business Week*. Or the surprise in a white (or black) face when they learn that I play golf and fenced in college. My god! I risk causing heart failure if I mention sailing!

Many white women who don't know me always pick out other blacks for me to date. I don't mean to eliminate my own people, but I want the freedom to choose based on compatibility, not solely on skin color. White blondes don't always choose white blondes with whom to fall in love. Why is it okay for everyone to appreciate diversity but me? Black activists frown upon my view as it divides, devalues the race. Yet I do not really fit among my own people.

Just as I refuse to allow whites to lump me with my own people because it makes it easier for them to deal with me, I refuse to be the object of anger among my own people who won't admit to their own prejudices because it presents a non-unified appearance to the white community. I have looked to the black community to shield me from the fallout of racism. But I find it rampant among us. I feel the hate for ourselves that we have inherited from listening to the white patriarchy.

For example, black folk did not like me during my youth. I happened to have "good" hair and light skin. One little black girl I still remember found it necessary to vent her anger at my difference by scratching my arms at recess. Other girls would seek me out after class and pick fights because I was too quiet and thought I "was better than everybody else." The blacks in my neighborhood picked at me unmercifully. I was a Russian nesting doll, forced to reside inside myself because of my multi-ethnic background.

For a long time now I've found it rewarding to confound the personnel agencies which require applicants to fill in the blocks according to race. I check all that apply. It is time that I answer to the parts of me that have always cried out for recognition instead of being beaten down and shut away. I answer to African American, Native American and Caucasian. Because that is ME. I celebrate in understanding with Zora Neal Hurston when I read her words, "At certain times I have no race. I am Me. When I set my hat at a certain angle and saunter down Seventh Avenue, Harlem City, feeling as snooty as the lions in front of...the library, for instance. The cosmic Zora emerges." She goes on to write, "Sometimes I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me." Go on Zora! Tell it.

Like Zora, I have learned to guard my individuality and sense of independence. I have paid dearly for my differences and intend to preserve them. I laugh when hairdressers scurry in confusion as they attempt to decide how to cut my hair. Should they look at my skin color first or the texture of my hair? I have learned to rejoice as I pull my own hairs from my hairbrush in the mor-

ning and notice the straight as well as wavy embedded in the same brush. While the hairdressers wring their hands, I have learned to be aggressive and tell them just what I want done, because I know best.

My right to be who I am means I won't accept boxes any longer. Even here in the grassroots jungle. Even in the gay community. I will not accept tokenism designed to alleviate the responsibility for dealing with issues in the communities of color. I am tired of politically correct groups "reaching out" with token arms. I will not join white groups as the only or first anything because invariably someone will expect me to hold their hands and allow them to experience clinically and without catharsis the black experience.

A renewed effort on both the part of white organizations and people of color is needed if we are to get beyond tokenism to genuine inclusion. People of color need to stop feeling discriminated against when they find themselves "the only one" at the bar, or the women's writing session at the Women's Center. How many times have I heard "I've stopped going because I was the only one in the crowd." Yet that same voice is angry that the organization is all white. Start by being a part; don't waste time to wonder why there are not others there — bring friends, build momentum. What is often interpreted as racism may be just hesitation on both sides derived from just plain shyness or the unfamiliarity of new surroundings. Relax. Don't shout racism so fast. Give it a few weeks, time for relationships to develop. Then shout if necessary.

White grassroots organizations must stretch themselves to recruit people of color. Not for their color, but for the enrichment and balance that may be achieved. The invitation must be devoid of arrogance or the idea that people of color must join because whites have something to offer them. Groups that say they encourage minority participation must examine if they *actively* encourage it. Do you reach deep down, become vulnerable yourselves, explore your own "isms." Do you realize you can remove that pink triangle from the lapel of your jacket when displaying it would hurt your chances for promotion or threaten your physical well-being? I cannot hide my color.

Do you go where the people are? Have you been to their churches, their playgrounds, eaten dinner at their tables or do you sit in your easy chair waiting for them to knock on your door? And when they do, do you stare at them with an incredulous look on your face exclaiming "what is *she* doing here?!!!" Because you never really expected your invitation to be accepted. If you really mean it, take your programs for AIDS awareness to the streets, take your quilting bees to the Black churches, recruit black people as a working everyday part of the process, not just during Black History Month. We can't afford racism to be a monkey on our backs. Especially in the gay community. We need the strength of all to reach the levels of acceptance we all desire.

As Audre Lorde has said so many times, I intend to live my life, vocally. I refuse to let anyone disqualify my voice as invalid. As long as you have a right to be, I have a right to be.

## Enter Niobi Productions

*New Boston company hosts Black lesbian and gay events*

By Wendy Scott

Boston's Black Lesbian and Gay community and supporters brought in the 1989 New Year with style and pomp at Niobi Production's formal "Throw-down" affair. Held in the penthouse banquet room of Government Center's Holiday Inn, the event also celebrated Niobi's first year anniversary of providing social functions specifically for Black Lesbians and Gays in Boston. Over 150 people attended.

The idea of Niobi first came to founder Marion Waller when she participated in Gay Pride here in 1987. "I was astonished by the number of scattered Black faces at [the] march ... I not only wanted to come out and be a part of the [Gay and Lesbian] commu-



Jewelle Gomez

## Humor

Continued from page 7

distinct signature of black women's humor.

Several years ago I was quoted in *Conditions Magazine* as saying: "I think our humor is one asset we (black women) have that white feminists don't." Since I made that rash generalization I've been accosted everywhere I go. Non-blacks run up to me at meetings, rallies and readings to tell me feminist jokes or thrust copies of Alison Bechdel's truly funny cartoons under my nose. What I was really trying to say was that black people, oppressed in this country to the point of genocide, have developed humor as a mainstay of our psychological survival. It is an immutable factor of our being. Yet a definition of its form remains illusory. What's so funny about a black woman being threatened by the police? Recent events will tell you: nothing! But when Aunt Irene tells the story we all roll on the floor with laughter.

Second only to the query, "What is love?" comes "What is comedy?" Black women continue to feel out what it means to us. Cheryl Clarke said in that same issue of *Conditions*: "The way we say 'Girl' when we're getting ready to tell some gossip kind of rolls off the tongue like a Mercedes Benz starting and then you know the humor is going to be a monster." Again it is the telling.

And that is not to say that black women writers are incapable of expressing our humor in print. Alexis DeVeauz is quite funny in much of her poetry; Alice Walker in her short stories (particularly in *You Can't Keep A Good Woman Down*); and Zora Neale Hurston in just about anything she wrote (particularly her autobiography, *Dust Tracks In The Road*).

When I think of Nikki Giovanni's popular, rhetorical poetry of the sixties, it's the way she read it that struck a comic chord in her audience. On paper her poetry often lacks craft but give Giovanni a chance to deepen an inflection and roll her eyes, and she's a comic. Maybe part of the laughter is the relief that we've even survived to tell the story. When black comedienues take to the stage to be our poets/griots, often it's the audacity of what they have to say. Like Danitra Vance's bold array of characters, which includes a feminist stripper and a reluctant transsexual, or Marsha Warfield's lewd tribute to her vibrator made by Black and Decker that runs on a "diehard" battery. Or maybe it's that they, like Aunt

Irene, dare to speak up at all.

For black lesbians, making use of our ironic perception of life (from the bottom of the bottom of the ladder) means running the risk of being accused of self-hatred or bitchiness. Since so much humor, any humor, relies on the ability to make fun of one's self anyway, that charge will never be easy to sidestep. When a Vance character pulls her hat down over her eyes and tells us in a deep voice how she became a transsexual when she accidentally OD'd on her birth control pills, the "Thought Police" are lurking in the audience to slap her with an "incorrect" citation. "What's a lesbian comic doing," they demand, "mentioning birth-control pills?" "Isn't she feeding the myth," they accuse, "that lesbians want to be men?" While the "T.P." make notes, most black lesbians who remember those silly dial-a-day dispensers are putting that together with the silky, pseudo-macho figure on stage and laughing uproariously.

When a black lesbian laughs at herself either on stage or in private, it's an affirmation of survival, her ability to make something from the nothing we've been offered in this society. It's a tactic we've picked up, like every other black woman, at the knee of our mothers, grandmothers and aunts over the last 500 years.

My Aunt Irene is notorious for the fanatical protection of her feet, made tender by too much work and too cruel shoes. When my toddling cousin stumbles too close, Aunt Irene simply says "gal" in this subterranean whisper that could stop rain from falling. My startled cousin freezes. We all laugh. Aunt Irene knows by now to expect the laughter; she plays to it. Her voice, her knowledge makes her funny. We know she's not even angry even though her feet really do hurt.

My cousin looks up puzzled at the wildly conflicting signals she's getting, then laughs too. She's just had her first lesson in black women's humor.

Its roots are found in the West African tradition of storytelling which historically transmitted religion and culture to each succeeding generation. The extended legal prohibition in this country of our right to learn to read or write further reinforced that tradition. Confronting this type of communicative impulse with the needs for blacks in slavery to mask or hide their true feelings created a kind of subtextual inflection game which today we have exaggerated and reshaped into something we call "attitude."

How does an African woman respond to a mistress for whom she cooks, cleans, sews; a mistress whose husband is the source of sexual harassment and who could, would and probably will sell her children? When asked to perform some absurdly menial task by her mistress (like Mae West's "Beulah, peel me a grape.") the black woman's "yes ma'am" is bound to be layered with the unsaid. By the time the story is related downstairs it is this subtext we are listening for. We are looking, nor for slapstick or bombast, but laconicism and cleverness. It is the "every goodbye ain't gone" 'round the corner approach to devastation. The kind of smooth blow that blues singers like Bessie Smith used to deliver. The humor is as subtle as a Japanese Tea Ceremony and as crude as a four-speed vibrator.

And it's not that white feminists don't have a sense of humor. Pat Bond, writer Bertha Harris, cartoonist Alison Bechdel always draw laughter from me. They just aren't my Aunt Irene. I may never have an inheritance to take to the bank but her legacy is one I will always celebrate. □

nity ... but I also wanted to experience it with other Black folks as well." Further motivated by the absence of a Black Lesbian and Gay post-Pride party, Marion finetuned her organizing and finance skills and developed what has now become Niobi Productions.

Her premiere event, organized with the support and assistance of family and friends, was Pride Tea Dance, held on June 17, 1988, a day after the 1988 Gay Pride March here. The event drew over 100 people and gave Marion further impetus to continue. Attendance at Niobi's most recent event, on January 15, swelled to over 200 and the production company now has a confidential mailing list of over 300.

Niobi's Sunday afternoon Tea Dances, events for which it is most recognized, are jamming catered events. "Whenever Niobi Productions gives a party you're going to be on the floor dancing ... and the buffet makes the environment more intimate," states Marion. Niobi has also expanded to sponsor events such as Mary Midget's reading of her Black Lesbian erotica last Dec. 8. An arts and crafts festival is scheduled for February 26.

Marion, who has a long history of commitment to community service, hopes that the future of Niobi Productions will include provision of other services to the Black Lesbian and Gay community. Cur-

Continued on page 15



# Naming ourselves and our community: Two viewpoints on the call to use the term 'African American'

## We are the Proper Name — We are the Subject

By Kate Rushin

African American. Afro-American. Colored. Black. People of African descent. Negro. People of Color.... Folks, being folks, will use all of these words when and where we see fit, as we have done for generations. The renewed discussion, generated by the Reverend Jesse Jackson's call for the term African American, will continue among Black people from all walks of life — not only activists and academics. Some object to the word African ("I wasn't born in Africa. I'm an American.") Some object to the word American. ("America never was America to me.") For Black people, this process of naming, renaming and self-definition is as important as the words that are used at various times and various places. (Afro-American may seem tame in the *New York Times* in 1989, but Afro-German would be a revelation and a triumph in *Der Spiegel*.)

Twenty-five years ago when Stokely Carmichael and the leader of SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) put out the call for Black Power, everyone sat up and took notice. When before had we heard these two words and these ideas linked in such a bold, unequivocal way? We took the word "black," which had been used to humiliate us, and turned it into an emblem of strength, unity and vision. Black Power. Black Pride. Black is Beautiful. To Be Young, Gifted and Black. These words inspired us, challenged us, engaged us, gave us hope. Not only did this happen in the United States, the call was answered around the world.

Now, we are less likely to hear about Black Power and are more likely to hear or read news reports stating "Black nominated for cabinet post," "Two blacks named to commission," "First black to head...." This kind of wording grates on me. Why? Maybe it's because these headlines are supposed to prove that things have changed, right? Things are getting better, right? Or maybe this use of the term black bothers me so much because I also hear audience members on Donahue, Oprah, and Geraldo say: "What do blacks want?... The blacks are getting all the breaks... Why should a black get my job?"

In the language of the mainstream mass media, people of the African Diaspora are reduced to "a black." Lower case. Object. This is not what we mean when we say Black. But it is the nature of popular American culture to appropriate the symbols, ideas, traditions of so-called minority cultures so that they lose their intended meaning and are sapped of their vitality.

It is not surprising, for instance, that George Michael, an Anglo-British pop star, won this year's American Music Award for "Best Soul R&B — Male." It's ironic that at one time the category Rhythm and Blues was code for Black music that would not get airplay on Top 40 stations. (Look what they've done to my song, Ma....)

Recently a friend and I called a Boston-based classical music program to thank the host of the show for playing the work of a Black composer, a rare occurrence on this particular show. He responded to our barbed compliment by saying "I never look at skin color." Skin color? Who's talking about skin color, we are talking about culture.

Jessie Jackson has recognized that it is once again time for us to take hold of the language of our self-definition and our cultural identity. Jackson's call to use the term African American is a call to rearticulate, refresh, revitalize, and rethink. It is a call to Re-Vision, a call to see again. African American.

African American reminds us all that we are not "merely" talking about skin color.

African American reminds us that people of the African Diaspora are also African-Canadian, Afro-German, Afro-Cuban, Panamanian, Nicaraguan, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Jamaican and Brazilian. We are Trinidadian, Puerto Rican, Afro-Dutch, Afro-British, Mashpee, Seminole, Cherokee, Surinamese, Grenadian and Bahamian (at least). African American reminds us that people of African descent speak not only English but also Spanish, French, Dutch, Creole, German, Italian, Portuguese and Arabic (at least). African American reminds us that we have as much to learn about our distinct perspectives and traditions as we have to learn about our common African roots.

We are the Proper Name. We are the Subject. So be it. African American. □

## Colored, Negro, Black and African-American

By John Bush

Having lived as a Negro and then as Black, I am convinced that being an African-American will not change the way U.S. society treats me in the slightest.

Recently, many civil rights leaders, including Jesse Jackson, have sought to replace the designation "Black" with the term "African-American." For a group of people who have suffered nearly every indignity imaginable, a new debate over a collective appellation is a waste of time. Especially considering that most people in the United States believe that nothing good has ever come out of Africa.

Being Black in the United States is a constant challenge, horrendous and degrading for the poor, and still extremely difficult for those Blacks who have managed to achieve financial success. Most whites, including those who are truly empathetic, simply don't know how trying it is to survive and persist in the negative environment in which we Blacks find ourselves.

Blacks have traditionally been poorer than most people in the United States, although perhaps not as poor as American Indians. We have suffered from malnutrition and poor health, and have had shorter lifespans than non-Blacks. Black babies of the poorer classes are more likely to be born under-nourished or with drug dependencies or AIDS, primarily because a significant percentage of the Black community is drug dependent. Moreover, drugs have become such an integral part of poor Black communities that innocent people are being killed daily in drug wars. Those Blacks who have managed to survive have often done so in sub-standard housing. Recent reports show us that Blacks are more likely to be denied a mortgage in nearly every state in the United States than non-Blacks. Black communities have also faced unemployment, under-employment and inadequate educational opportunities. Blacks are less likely to get into college, and, if they do get in, are less likely to finish. Most Black neighborhoods are filled with people who have given up hope of achieving success, or, worse still, have never hoped to have any of the comforts of life. Most Blacks have been far removed from those cultural imperatives that propel people to attempt to achieve the American Dream.

It would probably be unfair not to mention that progress has been made. Most Blacks today are better off than their



predecessors who were defined as Negroes. This is especially true for those born after 1965, the year the Voting Rights Act was passed by Congress. The descendants of the survivors of slavery were grudgingly given some opportunities after the civil rights struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. As Blacks, they began to be more visible in U.S. society, particularly after the white press began to publicize their efforts. Blacks who gained opportunities because of the civil rights movement began to attend more of the white universities. Upon receiving degrees, they began to enter the political and economic organizations of white America, although they discovered that it was not easy to make their ways into places where they had not previously numbered significantly. While they had a new name, they were wearing the same uniform (dark skin) and consequently faced the same problems as Negroes before them. Even though progress had been made through demonstrations, march-

es, acts of civil disobedience and various other means (some resulting in deaths), Blacks were and still are close to, if not at, the bottom of the economic pyramid. Whether Colored, Negro, Black or African-American, large segments of dark-skinned Americans are still suffering and dying.

Bayard Rustin once said that the humaneness of a society can be measured by how it treats its most despised minority. Even though he was a Black man, he argued that lesbians and gay men were treated worse than any other group in U.S. society. In my own case, I have usually concluded that I received negative treatment because I am both gay and Black. One may disagree with Rustin's position, but if he is more correct than incorrect, it is easy to understand why Black lesbians and gay men have a difficult road to travel. Gay or straight, Colored, Negroes, Blacks or African-Americans will have to continue to fight to be included in U.S. society. □



The May 1969 edition of *Negro Digest* features the words "Black World" at a time when Black was beginning to be claimed as a term of positive self-identification.



# Silence

Continued from page 8

various political organizations and movements — and in U.S. culture as a whole. Black lesbians and gay men are strong enough to challenge the racial, gender, and sexual identity entitlements that have caused our issues to be excluded or absorbed, appropriated or sanitized. While we still must proceed strategically and cautiously with non-gay or non-lesbian people, proceed we must. Remember the Civil Rights Movement chant: "Move on over or we'll move on over you." Jesse Jackson, during his presidential campaign, was the first nationally known politician to speak to a gay and lesbian constituency and to take on advocating for our civil rights. Certainly, his action ought to be emulated by other politicians, politicians, and organizations.

Black lesbians have fared better in claiming visibility in the gay and lesbian community because of the women's movement. We certainly had become familiar with the practices of sexism and heterosexism via our experience in both black liberation movement organizations and white leftist and progressive organizations. We were also savvy enough to know that anti-sexist politics do not necessarily mean anti-racist politics just as anti-racist politics do not necessarily mean anti-sexist politics. We were emboldened by contemporary black women writers like Toni Cade, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, whose writings were analyses of black women's oppression and were critical of the sacred institutions — marriage, heterosexuality, and the family. We found models of leadership in black lesbian writers like Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith who were out there countering the imposed invisibility and silence of black lesbians.

Black gay men did not fare as well. Their models, e.g., the late James Baldwin and the late Bayard Rustin, had spent their lives subordinating their oppression as gay men to fighting for racial equality and/or struggling for artistic freedom. (Despite their silence, which is not to imply they were closeted, Rustin and Baldwin were still undermined and attacked because of their homosexuality.) Baldwin, whose work was always informed by male homoeroticism, made this surprising commentary on the homosexuality of writer Andre Gide:

And Gide's homosexuality, I felt was his own affair which he ought to have kept hidden from us, or if he needed to be so explicit....he ought, in a word, to have sounded a little less *disturbed*.

("The Male Prison," 1954)

I don't believe Baldwin would have said that in this decade, but, as was stated earlier, he never claimed a gay community, a community to whom his work was the world.

Though the black movement tried to keep him invisible, Rustin managed to always be in the thick, interceding for Martin Luther King, writing his speeches, preventing people from exploiting him, keeping the lid on the seamy escapades of King himself and his entourage (Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 1988). The 1963 March on Washington might not have happened had it not been for Rustin; but he had to be kept invisible because he was a gay man. And his identity as a gay black male elder could have been erased had it not been for the black gay male community embracing him late in his life. In an interview with the late Joseph Beam, anthologist, activist, and promoter of black gay male visibility and culture, Rustin said the following regarding "the closet:"

....[E]very Gay who is in the closet is ultimately a threat to the freedom of Gays. I don't want to seem intolerant.... and I think we have to say that to them with a great deal of affection, but remaining in the closet is the other side of prejudice against Gays. Because until you challenge it, you are not playing an active role in fighting.

(*Black/Out*, 1987)

Rustin is certainly a model of gay leadership — for better and for worse. For better, because gay men and lesbians are tireless freedom fighters, organizers, facilitators, motivators. For worse, because in order to make our contributions to social change, gay men and lesbians have had to deny our lives. Gay men and lesbians have been able to contribute so much to social change movements, precisely because we have not been tethered to heterosexual and heterosexist values.

The same style of leadership is apparent in

the life of the late Ella Baker. I have often wondered if Baker was a lesbian and if her designation of herself as a "facilitator" as opposed to a "leader" was as much a tactic to protect a lesbian identity as it was reflective of her disdain for the "leader-centered" (Garrow) approach to organizing. Like her close friend Rustin, Baker was denied more visible leadership and greater influence in the black movement of the 1950s and 1960s because she was radical, a true grassroots organizer, didn't need heroes, especially male ones, and not least of all, because she was a woman. The fact that one has to wonder if Baker was a lesbian points to the more startling invisibility of black lesbians in the black movement. Why and how do we know that Rustin and Baldwin were gay men and why and how don't we know whether a woman like Baker was a lesbian? Baker, who died in 1987, said this of her particular kind of leadership:

....I don't think I thought of myself largely as a *woman*. I thought of myself as an individual with a certain amount of sense of the need of people to participate in the movement. I have always thought what is needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in developing leadership among other people.

(Lerner, *Black Women in White America*, 1971)

The Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee (SNCC) would not have been organized without Baker. There is no conclusive proof that Baker was a lesbian. However, her autonomy and her preference for being in the background are often characteristics of the leadership style of lesbians working in straight organizations. Certainly, one can argue that this style is particularly female. Yet, I feel Baker's autonomy and unwillingness to be "enamored" of black male preachers and black male leadership set her apart and set her forth as a model of lesbian leadership — even if she was not a lesbian.

Both Rustin and Baker were excellent role models for anyone and both were silenced because they did not fulfill conventional leadership expectations, i.e. neither wasted their energies adhering to heterosexual standards. Rustin was a gay man who did not pass as heterosexual; and Baker was a woman not dependent upon male approval. Black gay men and lesbians, like Rustin and Baker, have more energy and creativity in our own and other organizations, because we are not shackled to heterosexist models of leadership, even those of us who have chosen silence and invisibility.

The silence and invisibility are as costly as they are cautionary. I lose the opportunity to educate others and to speak up to protect my own integrity. Every time I don't come out, don't take a stand, don't protest erasure, the burden becomes heavier on someone else. And even though invisibility and silence have been abiding metaphors in the existential life of the race, the race can no longer impose them in order to suppress gay men and lesbians. The more black gay men and lesbians assert our identities as we assume leadership, the more support we create for others to come out. The black community, using Jesse Jackson as an example, has got to endorse gay and lesbian leadership. Black lesbians and gay men must be loud and flamboyant in transforming the black community toward that end. Happy gay and lesbian black history month. □

Your ad could be here for as little as \$64 per month

Call (617) 426-4469

## HAYMARKET PEOPLE'S FUND

15 years of supporting struggles for peace, equality, and economic justice in New England.

For a grant application call or write:

25 West Street  
5th Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
ph. 617/426-1909

## RESIST

We've been funding peace and social justice for 21 years; some recent grants to gay/lesbian and AIDS organizations include:

All Mujeres Interested in Getting Active (Houston, TX), GLAD (Boston, MA), GCN (Boston, MA), National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays (Detroit, MI), Black and White Men Together (Memphis, TN), Men of All Colors Together (Westport, MA), Testing the Limits (New York, NY).

- ☐ Here's my donation.
- ☐ Please send me more information.
- ☐ Please send me your grant guidelines.

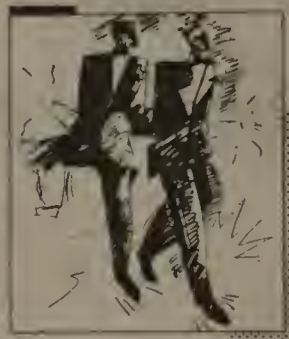
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY**  
*Funding social change since 1967*

# BLACK & GAY



Through stories and poetry, essays and artwork, twenty-nine black gay men explore what it means to be doubly different, in this first-of-its-kind anthology. Their voices range from poignant to erotic to angry — but they always reflect the affirming power of their visions.

## IN THE LIFE

A BLACK GAY ANTHOLOGY

edited by Joseph Beam

\$7.95 in bookstores, or clip this ad to order.

☐ Enclosed is \$8.50 (postpaid) for **IN THE LIFE**.

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

Alyson Publications, Dept. P-89

40 Plympton St.  
Boston, MA 02118

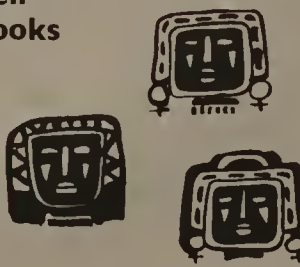
# TALKING BACK

thinking feminist • thinking black  
by bell hooks

## TALKING BACK

thinking feminist • thinking black

bell hooks



"Talking back" and "back talk" mean about the same things: defying authority, daring to speak as an equal, or just having an opinion. Well known social critic, bell hooks, always says it exactly like she sees it, feels it, and lives it. When it comes to bigotry, there's no minding words; bell hooks talks back!

To order, send the price of the book (\$10.00) plus \$1.50 shipping charge to: South End Press, 300 Raritan Ctr Pkwy., Edison, NJ 08818. Or buy a copy at your local, independent bookstore (see below).

Meet Bell Hooks and share in the celebration of this title's publication at 3:00 pm on March 5, 1989 at New Words Bookstore in Cambridge!

## NEW FROM Kitchen Table

Women of Color Press



# HEALING HEART:

P o e m s 1 9 7 3 - 1 9 8 8  
by Gloria T. Hull

In this passionate and risk-taking collection, Hull explores relationships with family, friends, and lovers, and the process of healing from sexual and emotional abuse.

"Along with Toni Morrison, Charlotte Carter, and Lois Elaine Griffith, we are blessed with another foreign tongue: the voice of a free, fierce, sensual and vivid woman of color. Gloria Hull is 'family.' She's one of us. She means to live."

— Ntozake Shange

160 pages, illustrated, \$8.95. Please include \$1.50 p. & h. for the first book and \$.50 for each additional book. Write for our free complete catalogue listing more than 100 titles by and about women of color. P.O. Box 908-G, Latham, NY 12110.



# Speaking out about voyages of self-discovery

*Phil Harper and Kenji Oshima, Boston-area public speakers, talk candidly about their experiences exploring racism, homophobia and pride*

By Linda Hirsch

Last spring, the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Network at Tufts University contacted Boston's Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau, seeking leaders for an on-campus workshop on the experiences of people of color within the lesbian and gay community. Speakers Bureau members Phillip B. Harper and Kenji Oshima eagerly volunteered.

Each man had a clear personal stake in the workshop topic. Phil, 27, a teacher of college English, had been pondering the special conflicts of being black and gay ever since his high school days in an integrated neighborhood in Detroit. Kenji, a 26-year-old bicycle mechanic, was raised by a Japanese father and a white mother in a nearly-all-white Boston suburb. His parents, both social workers, never discussed his cultural heritage with him directly; consequently his self-discovery as a person of color began in adulthood.

As the workshop began, the two leaders immediately felt overwhelmed. About 25 people attended, almost all of traditional college age but diverse in terms of gender, race and sexual orientation. "What emerged more than anything," recalls Phil, "was a sense of people of color with a lot of anger, and concern but puzzlement on the part of whites." Initially dismayed because they weren't sure what they should try to accomplish, Kenji and Phil went ahead with the discussion. Afterward, they felt empowered by a deeper understanding of the complex, interwoven issues of racism and homophobia.

The following is an edited transcript of conversations held with Kenji and Phil in the months after the workshop. As Phil wisely states, everyone's perspective on these matters is biased by her/his background, and a necessary starting place is to acknowledge that bias. Toward that end, the interviewer wishes to go on record as white, Jewish, middle-class and 39.

\*\*\*

**Linda:** You've said that leading the [Tufts] workshop was a powerful experience for you, and that you learned a great deal. How so?

**Kenji:** For me, it was a comfortable place to deal with my own bigotry, especially [toward] black people. I grew up in a predominantly white community; I think [we were] the only [people] of color except my next door neighbor, Bishop Burgess, the only black bishop in Massachusetts. And since I was raised without direct and positive exposure to [other] people of color, much less my own color, black people were an oddity. (I apologize.) And so sitting next to Phil, who [was] a new friend, and respecting him and hearing him talk about his anger [helped me realize] that I think in privileged ways.

**Phil:** I really had to admit my own internalized racism. In the gay community, we talk a lot about internalized homophobia; we all have a sense of what [that] is even if we don't talk about it. But it's never been my sense, at least in the black community, that people talk about internalized racism, or even admit that such a thing exists. And that was something I had to come to terms with in that room, because I felt, as the moderator, that if I didn't, we weren't going to get anywhere.

Once we started with questions from the group, a friend of mine, who also came from the [Gay and Lesbian Speakers] Bureau, said, "Phil, I'd like to ask you what sort of manifestations your internalized racism took." [That] made everybody start talking about what it meant to grow up as someone who isn't white in U.S. culture, and how, no matter how positive you feel about yourself — or want to think about yourself — you have been influenced to have doubts about your self-worth because you aren't white. And for me to [admit] that is just so difficult.

**Linda:** How did you answer the question?

**Phil:** For me, the manifestation of [internalized racism] is worry about being attractive, being beautiful. You sort of know that "everything is beautiful in its own way," but at the same time, in this culture, all our standards of human beauty basically are white. From my earliest memory, that was always a backdrop for me, this worry that because I wasn't white, I wasn't physically beautiful or attractive, and therefore I wasn't worthy. And when I said this in the group, I noticed all of the other black people were nodding very heartily in agreement, that they had all felt the same thing.

The night before [the workshop] I [saw] Barbara Walters interview Oprah Winfrey, and ask, "Did you ever wish you were white?" Now I [sat] in front of my TV going, "My god, I can't believe she asked her that question! What is she going to say?" And as a black person, I had this dual response. On the one hand, my sense of pride wanted her to say, "No, why should I? Black people are just as good as white people, so there should be no reason." On the other hand, deep down in my heart of hearts, I can't imagine any black person in the world who didn't wish they were white, whether it was a conscious thing or not. And [Oprah Winfrey] paused for a really long time, and then she said, "Yes, I did." But then she went on very articulately to say why, and of course the reason is that as you're growing up, it seems [that] everyone who has anything is white.

**Kenji:** Whoopi Goldberg does a great skit [about] being a little girl. She takes a shirt and puts it over her head ...

**Phil:** ... so it dangles down, and she pretends she has long, blonde hair.

**Kenji:** When I first saw it, I thought it was novel. And then [I heard at the workshop] from other black people that this is a classic experience, to want to have blonde hair.

I've [realized] that I've always been attracted to a particular type of man: shorter than I am, a little more muscular ...

**Phil:** Blond?

**Kenji:** Yeah, Aryan. Dirty blond, 17, scruffy, masculine, assumably heterosexual, working-class male. And I realized then and there that the reason I have a difficult time looking in the mirror is that, every time, I keep on wishing and expecting to see something else; that somehow I'm going to be shorter, and my upper torso is going to be [wider]. It's a very subtle thing.

**Phil:** [And] although it's really difficult to [generalize] about the gay male community, I think [that] a very influential segment looks at physical attractiveness as very important. So it's very disconcerting to grow up worried about [attractiveness] into a culture where ...

**Kenji:** ... where that's all it is. Looks, sex, money.

**Phil:** And a certain type of looks, which are always very white and very wealthy-looking. [Appearance] seems to be the focus of everything: it determines whether you can go into a certain bar, and, once you get [in], whether you're served quickly...

One black lesbian [at the workshop] said she felt that in her relationships with white women she had been seen as this exotic sexual object. I think that goes on in the gay male community as well.

**Linda:** I remember saying that you brought some "personal" ads to the workshop, ones where white men specify the race of the partners they were seeking.

**Phil:** It seems to me a mark of incredible privilege, within the context of this very sexual gay male culture, to be able to say, as a white man, "I don't want to have sex with black men or Asian men," or "I only want to have sex with black men or Asian men." The idea [is that] you are the ultimate sexual consumer and that you can choose what you want.

**Linda:** Does that mean that people of color can't choose?

**Phil:** You could certainly say [what your preference was], but as a man of color you don't have as much power.

**Kenji:** The first friend I ever had was Irish. I was four or five, and he was older, went to elementary school. I remember our relationship as "brains and brawn": I was the brains, he was the brawn.

**Phil:** It's funny that even at that age [your friendship] took that form because, in my consciousness anyway, that's the stereotype of Asian people in this culture, incredibly intellectually able. From my point of view, it's always been the opposite for black people; we've always been seen as less intelligent than anyone else.

Recently [I heard] one researcher talking about the fact that it was very difficult to get young people within certain black communities to value education, because, in their peer group, to be interested in learning and perceived as intelligent is to be seen as identifying with white people and not with blacks. I remember feeling that [while] growing up. And in my neighborhood once you got old enough and people thought about these things, trying to identify with whites was also seen as being gay, being a faggot. So everything was always very interwoven, in my experience.

**Linda:** Kenji, you were talking before about dealing with your racism toward black people. Do you also identify yourself as a person of color? And if so, what has that been like for you?

**Kenji:** I [had] always denied it, [but] sometime in the past couple of years I've said, "I am Japanese; I'm very Japanese." [It's been] a process of getting in touch with myself, of loving myself.

[As an Asian], there's part of me that [feels] as if I'm standing on a pedestal. It's not so much that I'm better than anyone else; it's that I have to be better. [The Japanese] came to this country and had to strive to be "better." To be accepted, we have to go out of our way. What's that



Phil Harper

hideous phrase?

**Phil:** The "model minority."

**Kenji:** Yeah. [But another] part of it is that, if you're Japanese, there is no sense of being better. It's humbleness. You just don't talk about it.

**Phil:** I remember your telling me about the intense silence in Japanese culture. That you didn't talk about anything.

**Kenji:** Oh no, nothing is verbalized. Some people use a lot of words, and the Asian uses nothing — silence. And that's power! [But it's also] a self-oppression.

**Linda:** What were your families' attitudes toward gayness and racial issues?

**Phil:** When I told [my father] that I was gay — a fact that he really hates and can't deal with — one of his first responses was [to tell me] that I was betraying the black race. To say to your son that, by virtue of what he is, he is turning his back on his culture is an incredibly devastating thing. And ever since then — about eight years ago — that's [been] in the back of my mind, that somehow I have to choose between being black and being gay. And clearly not everyone in the black community feels that way. [Yet] there is, from a lot of [black] people, very intense homophobia, just [as], in many ways, there's very intense racism in the gay community, and having to deal with these overlaps is tricky sometimes.

**Linda:** Did you grow up around a lot of other black kids?

**Phil:** Up until the time I was 13, my family lived in an all-black neighborhood in Detroit. The schools that I went to, both the grammar school and the junior high school, were integrated, probably about 60 percent black, 40 percent white. [Then] my parents moved to a "better" part of town, which also meant that it was more integrated. And I continued to go to schools that were integrated to the same degree as [before]. But as I got older and more intellectually active, my friends started to change. Even though I was still exposed to just as many black people as I had always been, I started to make more white friends, because those were the people who were interested in doing the things I was doing, or who would admit it. There were black people who were just as studious as I was, but studiousness still had a stigma attached in the black community.

Continued on page 16



Kenji Oshima

Richard Lehart



Black Lesbian and Gay Resource List

<b>Arkansas</b>  PAZ Press P.O. Box 3146 Fayetteville, AR 72702  <b>California</b>  BlackJack P.O. Box 83515 Los Angeles, CA 30083   Lesbians of Color P.O. Box 5602 San Diego, CA 92105   Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum P.O. Box 29812 Los Angeles, CA 90027   Gentlemen Concerned P.O. Box 712298 Los Angeles, CA 90071   Black Gay and Lesbian Resource List Cal. Wimmin of Color Rap Group 2025 E. 10th St. Long Beach, CA 90804   Nat. Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays c/o James B. Newton III 4895 Deaton Dr. San Diego, CA 92101   Lesbians of Color Box 5602 San Diego, CA 92105   Women of Color United 4159 Beta St. San Diego, CA 92113   Third World Caucus/Alice B. Toklas Lesbian Gay Democratic Club Box 11316 San Francisco, CA 94101   Third World AIDS Advisory Task Force c/o San Francisco AIDS Foundation 54 10th St. San Francisco, CA 94103   Timothy Lee Coalition c/o Valencia Hospital 523A Valencia St. San Francisco, CA 94110   Black & White Men Together — National 584 Castro St. , No.140 San Francisco, CA 94114   Connexions 4228 Telegraph Ave. Oakland, CA 94605   Third World Lesbian Support Group Pacific Center 2712 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley, CA 94705   Multi-Cultural Lesbian & Gay Studies 415 Eshleman Hall, UC Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720   People of Color AIDS Survival Effort 3177 Ocean View Blvd. San Diego, CA 92113 612/231-9300   Black & White Men Together — S.F. 2261 Market St. No.506 San Francisco, CA 94114   Black & White Men Together — L.A. Suite 109-136 7985 Santa Monica Blvd. W. Hollywood, CA 90046   Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays 437 Webster St. San Francisco, CA 94117   National Minority AIDS Council 5882 W. Pico Blvd., No.210 Los Angeles, CA 90019 213/936-4949  <b>Connecticut</b>  Men of All Colors Together — Conn. PO Box 12332 Hartford, CT 06112  <b>Florida</b>  Black & White Men Together — B.B. 411 Chapel Drive Tallahassee, FL 32304   <b>Georgia</b>  Black & White Men Together — Atlanta P.O. Box 22472 Atlanta, GA 30306   GAMA/Gay Atlanta Minority Association P.O. Box 3381 Atlanta, GA 30302   Black Women's Health Project 1237 Gordon St., SW Atlanta, GA 30310  Outreach Inc. 1422 W. Peachtree N.E., Suite 814 Atlanta, GA 30309	<b>Illinois</b>  Committee on Black Gay Men P.O. Box 7209 Chicago, IL 60680 312/248-5188   Stop AIDS Chicago 945 W. George Chicago, IL 60651 312/871-3300   Black & White Men Together — Chicago P.O. Box 14622 Chicago, IL 60614   Kupona Network 4611 So. Ellis Ave. Chicago, IL 60653 312/536-3000   Chicago Coal. of Black Lesbians & Gays c/o Max Smith 5633 North Winthrop, Suite 312 Chicago, IL 60660  <b>Indiana</b>  Third Woman Press c/o Chicano-Rigueno Studies Ballantine Hall 849 Indiana University Bloomington, IN 47405  Black & White Men Together — Indpls. PO Box 88784 Indianapolis, IN 46208  <b>Kentucky</b>  Black & White Men Together — Louisville Box 1838 Louisville, KY 40201   Black Lesbian Network Box 1701 Louisville, KY 40201   <b>Louisiana</b>  Langston/Jones c/o Kohn PO Box 5061 New Orleans, LA 70150   Minority People Against AIDS Comm. PO Box 57641 New Orleans, LA 70157 504/529-2661  <b>Maryland</b>  Black & White Men Together — Baltimore P.O. Box 1334 Baltimore, MD 21203   Baltimore Coalition of Black Lesbians 618 W. Franklin St. Apt. 6 Baltimore, MD 21201   Baltimore Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays c/o Box 22575 Baltimore, MD 21203  <b>Massachusetts</b>  Black Men's Association P.O. Box 196 — Astor St. Boston, MA 02123   Men of All Colors Together — Boston GCN Box I 62 Berkeley St. Boston, MA 02116  <b>Michigan</b>  Chieftains Box 04183 Detroit, MI 48204   Black & White Men Together — Detroit P.O. Box 8831 Detroit, MI 48224   Nat. Coalition for Black Lesbians & Gays 19641 West Seven Mile Rd. Detroit, MI 48219 313/537-0484   Detroit Coal. of Black Lesbians & Gays PO Box 31-5177 Detroit, MI 48231   Our Family PO Box 35361 Detroit, MI 48235  <b>Minnesota</b>  IRUWA PO Box 19146 Minneapolis, MN 55419   <b>Mississippi</b>  Southern Rural Women's Network 500 East County Line Road Jackson, MS 39211	<b>Missouri</b>  Black & White Men Together — K.C. PO Box 414075 Kansas City, MO 64141   <b>New York</b>  Gay, Bisexual, Lesbians of Color Cornell University 535 Willard "Straight" Hall Ithaca, NY 14853   Study Group on Black Lesbians c/o Brooks Lesbian Herstory P.O. Box 1258 New York, NY 10001   Salsa Soul Sisters P.O. Box 1119 New York, NY 10009   Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press P.O. Box 908 Latham, NY 12110   The Black Lesbian 2130 First Avenue no. 2601 New York, NY 10029   Committee of Black Gay Men 1297 Bergen Street Brooklyn, NY 11213   Women of Color Photo History Project PO Box 2651 Peter Stuyvesant Station New York, NY 10009   Gay Men of African Descent c/o Gay Community Center 208 W. 13th St. New York, NY 10011 212/969-0014   Committee of Visibility of the Other Black Woman c/o Johnston 2130 First Ave. No.2601 New York, NY 10029   Harlem Metropolitan Community Church PO Box 574 New York, NY 10030   Third World Resource Directory Orbis Books Maryknoll, NY 19545   Conditions PO Box 56 New York, NY 11215   Other Countries PO Box 21176 Midtown New York, NY 10129   Third World Women's Archives Box 159 Brooklyn, NY 11232   Haitian Coalition on AIDS 50 Court St. Suite 605 Brooklyn, NY 11201 718/855-7275   Men of All Colors Together — N.Y. Box 1518 Ansonia Station New York, NY 10023   Committee of Outraged Lesbians (COOL) 204 W. 20th St. Box R-93 New York, NY 10011 212/243-0202   Minority Task Force on AIDS 92 St. Nicholas Ave. No.18 New York, NY 10026   <b>North Carolina</b>  Triangle Coal. of Black Lesbians & Gays 604 W. Chapel Hill St. Durham, NC 27701 919/682-6374   <b>Ohio</b>  Men of All Colors Together — Cinci. c/o Scott MacLarty 2626 Euclid Ave. No.3 Cincinnati, OH 45219   Black & White Men Together — Youngstown PO Box 1346 Youngstown, OH 44501   Black & White Men Together — Columbus PO Box 151276 Columbus, OH 43215   Black & White Men Together — Cleveland PO Box 5144 Cleveland, OH 44101   Minority Education Committee on AIDS Ohio Department of Health 246 North High St. Columbus, OH 43215 614/466-5480	<b>Oregon</b>  Black Lesbians/Gays United 654 SW Grant St. No.101 Portland, OR 97201   <b>Pennsylvania</b>  ADODI PHILADELPHIA P.O. Box 19312 Kingsessing Station Philadelphia, PA 19143   Concerned Black Men P.O. Box 20593 Philadelphia, PA 11238   Les Femmes Unies P.O. Box 42833 Philadelphia, PA 19101   Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues (BEBASHI) PO Box 26388 Philadelphia, PA 19141 215/546-4140   Black Gay Archives Box 30024 Philadelphia, PA 19103   Black & White Men Together — Phila. PO Box 42257 Philadelphia, PA 19101   <b>Tennessee</b>  Memphis Black Gay Support 1285 Niese Memphis, TN 38106   Black & White Men Together — Memphis PO Box 41773 Memphis, TN 38174   <b>Texas</b>  Men of All Colors Together — Dallas PO Box 190611 Dallas, TX 75219   <b>Drum</b> (publication) Ebony Connection, Inc. PO Box 1428 Austin, TX 78767   <b>Washington</b>  Gay Black Women's Rap & Support Group 1505 Broadway Seattle, WA 98122   Seattle Men of All Colors and Cultures Together, c/o George B. Houston 742 Boylston Ave. East Seattle, WA 98102   <b>Washington, D.C.</b>  Faith Temple 1313 New York Ave., N.W. (New York Ave. Presbyterian Church) Washington, D.C.   Black & White Men Together — D.C. P.O. Box 7311 Washington, D.C. 20056   Nubian Womyn P.O. Box 6781 Washington, D.C. 20020   Sapphire Sapphos PO Box 26327 Washington, D.C. 20001   National Institute for Women of Color PO Box 50583 Washington, D.C. 20004   Third World Gay Grad Students c/o Washington Blade Box 302 930 F St. N.W. No.315 Washington, D.C. 20004   Spectrum — See the Light Koba Associates 1156 15th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005   Upfront PO Box 2293 Washington, D.C. 20013   Be Bop Books PO Box 33085 Washington, D.C. 20033   Black & White Men Together — D.C. PO Box 7311 Washington, DC 20056   Spectrum Project c/o Koba Associates 1156 15th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005 202/328-5700	<b>D.C. Coalition of Black Gay Women and Men</b> PO Box 50622 Washington, D.C. 20004   National Minority AIDS Council PO Box 28574 Washington, D.C. 20038 202/544-1076   National AIDS Network 1012 14th St., N.W., Suite 601 Washington, D.C. 20005 202/347-0390   <b>Wisconsin</b>  Black & White Men Together — Milw. PO Box 12292 Milwaukee, WI 53212   <b>International</b>  Third World Women's Publication c/o Kwame Nkrumah House 173 Old Street London EC1 6NJ England   Black Lesbian & Gay Centre BM Box no. 4390 London WCIN 3XX England   Lesbians of Colour P.O. Box 6597, Station A Toronto, Ontario Canada M5W 1X9   Zami Box 7289, Station A Toronto, Ontario Canada M5W 1X9
--	--	---	--	---

Help us stay resource-full

Help **GCN** keep our Black Lesbian and Gay resource list up to date! If you know of new Black lesbian and/or gay groups we overlooked or if some of our listings are no longer accurate, please drop us a line. Write Black Lesbian/Gay Resource List, c/o **GCN**, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



# Black Haiku

By Alan E. Miller

Alan E. Miller is a Black gay poet now living in Oakland, Calif. These poems are taken from at the club, published in 1988 by grand entrances press. The poet writes, "My experiences in Oakland bars provide the inspiration for the poems that follow. Breathing heavily in the background are the funky yet delightful Cabel's Reef and the pretentious yet quaint Bella Napoli, wick only in America, and indeed in Oakland, displays its enduring fresco of Naples, Italy to customers of a Chinese restaurant by day and a Black gay bar by night. Each three lines constitutes a haiku, a separate voice, a separate poem, uttered by the patrons: first to each other and now to you."

like their cigarettes  
alive only at the tips  
these lovely fireflies

everywhere you look: this  
black bull in the china shop  
of convention

quickly recognizing  
who spends all night preparing  
for grand entrances

a lifetime's work  
to change myself into someone  
even you could love

elaborate taste  
and impeccable manners  
are rarely enough

everyone  
is a potential employer,  
with openings to fill

his eyes howl at me  
coyote separated  
from the roving pack

sipping courage from  
a frosted glass, he glares at me  
til closing time

if I had not checked  
his pulse personally,  
I'd guess mannequin

under the table  
where everyone can see, we touch:  
hand to burning hand

I'm gonna throw my legs  
up in the air and let them fall  
where they may

after leading questions  
I review the shortest list:  
what I won't do for love

the gossip about his absence  
is, he stayed home —  
with company — AIDS

dancing together,  
we are partners in this  
perfect mimicry

we play hide and seek,  
silently, without moving:  
nothing else to do

overheard: "for all his  
limitations, that man  
can fuck up a storm"

with a beer or two  
what we can remember,  
what we can forget

after the stranger leaves,  
I savor the settling  
of his perfumed dust

the most popular  
accessory even now:  
basic self-hatred

the wedding band clanging  
against glass causes a thousand  
tiny explosions

folk wisdom: never judge  
a man until you have danced  
in his spiked heels

at closing time  
the bartender grunts, "last one  
out gets to sleep with me"

exiting the john  
I check the mirror  
for the face of naked lust

outside I am asked  
if I need something. wonder  
how it is he knew?

## Niobi

Continued from page 10

rently a state field representative monitoring community action agencies, Marion has also worked with Black Rainbow Coalition activist Mel King at the Greater Roxbury Neighborhood Authorities. She says, "[T]here's a lot of discrimination [against the Black Lesbian and Gay community] and there's a lot of people who feel very uncomfortable with being [Lesbian and Gay]... There should be organizations or workshops to help people...." With the organizing help of Karen Bunch, Virginia Seymour, and family, Marion plans to shape these ideas into functions geared towards Boston's Black Lesbian and Gay community. She is also interested in developing programs geared specifically to youth.

"Niobi is not going to disappear ... it's going full speed, it's going to take the speed of the people who are interested in the organization ... I'm going as fast as [the Black Lesbian and Gay community] tell me to go." If Niobi expands at the rate the people of Boston want, then it's bound to expand quickly.

For further information on Niobi Productions, please contact (617) 661-7673. □

LYNNE S. BRANDON, PH.D.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

57 CAMERON AVE. • SOMERVILLE, MA 02144 • 617-776-5866

LONG RANGE PLANNING, STATE CONTRACTING,  
BUDGETING, STAFF TRAINING & SUPERVISION,  
CONVERSION TO COMPUTERIZED SYSTEMS

## Fire Fox Video

COURTHOUSE SQ. MALL  
Exit 32 Route 3, head east.

83 Parkhurst Rd, Chelmsford  
Only 15 min. from Rte. 128

FANTASTIC PRICES - LOWEST ANYWHERE!

HUNDREDS OF  
GAY VIDEOS

\*\$4.95 and up  
\*with \$10 purchase

CATALINA \$39.95  
H.I.S., HOT SHOTS \$29.95  
Le SALON \$24.95

BUY 1, GET 1  
with this ad **FREE!**

# COMMUNITY GUIDE

### ACCOMMODATIONS

OASIS GUEST HOUSE  
22 Edgerly Road  
Boston, MA 02115  
(617) 267-2262

### ACUPUNCTURE

JAMES F. LEATH, R. Ac.  
HARMONY HOLISTIC  
HEALTH  
669 Somerville Ave.  
Somerville, Mass.  
Porter Square T  
628-9547

### ALCOHOL/DRUG TREATMENT

SPOFFORD HALL  
Route 9A  
Spofford, NH 03462  
(603) 363-4545

AUDITING/TAXES  
LILLIAN GONZALES  
Certified Public Accountant  
126 State Street  
Boston, MA 02109  
523-1060

### BICYCLES

FERRIS WHEELS  
Bicycle Shop  
64 South Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
617-522-7082

BROADWAY BICYCLE  
SCHOOL  
351 Broadway, Cambridge  
868-3392  
T,W,F,Sat 10-6, Th 12-7  
Repairs/Parts/Workspace

### BOOKS

GLAD DAY BOOKSTORE  
673 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 267-3010

LIBERATION BOOK CLUB  
P.O. Box 453  
South Norwalk, CT 06856.  
National gay & lesbian book  
club

NEW WORDS  
A WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE  
186 Hampshire Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
876-5310

REDBOOK STORE  
Books of Political Struggle,  
South Africa, Central America,  
Gay & Lesbian literature  
92 Green St.  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
(617) 522-1464

### CHIROPRACTORS

DR. RITA L. FIELD  
HARMONY HOLISTIC  
HEALTH  
669 Somerville Av  
Somerville, MA 02143  
628-9547

DR. TIMOTHY KNIGHT  
1100 Massachusetts Ave  
Arlington, MA 02174  
(617) 641-2510

DR. DAVID MOULTON  
Suite 333  
45 Newbury St  
Boston, MA 02116  
266-8584

### DOG TRAINING

FAMILY DOG TRAINING  
CENTER  
Dog Behavior Specialists  
Medford, MA  
395-9084

### ELECTROLYSIS

JUDY FEINER  
Complimentary consultation  
Computer electrolysis specialist  
Central Sq., Cambridge  
497-2019

### FLORISTS

REMEMBRANCES FLORAL  
DESIGN  
12 Mt. Auburn St.  
Watertown Sq., MA  
926-4289

### HAIR SALONS

B. CUMMINGS  
309 Shawmut Ave.  
Boston, MA 02118  
338-5356  
Wed.-Sat. 10-6

### HEALTH

BOSTON HEALTH  
ASSOCIATES  
Holistic Health Referral Service  
Psychotherapy, Bodywork,  
Movement, Nutrition and  
Spiritual Counseling  
266-8122 M-Th., 12-7

FENWAY COMMUNITY  
HEALTH CENTER  
16 Haviland Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
(Medical Center and HIV Out-  
patient Clinic: 267-7573) and  
93 Massachusetts Avenue  
Boston, MA 02115  
(Mental Health, Research,  
Community Services: 267-0900)

FEMINIST HEALTH CENTER  
OF PORTSMOUTH  
232 Court St.  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
(603) 436-7588  
STD clinic for men and women  
Mon. eves.: free anon, HIV  
counseling & testing

DR. DAVID A. RUSSELL  
142 Berkeley St.  
at Columbus Ave.  
(617) 247-7555  
A gay physician specializing in  
health care for the gay & les-  
bian community.

### HOUSEKEEPING

CLEAN UP YOUR ACT  
Housekeeping Service  
Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and  
special occasions  
776-2271

### INSURANCE

J.J. BODNER INSURANCE  
552 Columbus Ave.  
Boston, Ma. 02118  
(617) 437-9400  
Servicing all your insurance  
needs

DAVID L. COLLINS, CLU  
Congress St  
P.O. Box 1762  
Boston, Ma 02105  
1-800-352-3185

KUNEVICH & LAU  
INSURANCE AGENCY  
241 Washington St.  
Brookline, MA 02146  
731-1015

### LAWYERS

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD  
Lawyers Referral Service  
227-7008  
M-F 1-5 p.m.

### MASSAGE

MIDTOWN HEALTH CLUB  
Swedish, Japanese, Esalen  
220 Huntington Ave.  
(617) 262-1000, x 298  
M-Sat., 12-7

### PHOTOGRAPHY

DAVID'S PHOTOGRAPHY  
PO Box 375 McCormack Sta.  
Boston, MA 02101  
236-0365

### PRINTING

RED SUN PRESS  
94 Green St  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
524-6822

### REAL ESTATE

INNOVATIVE MOVES  
REAL ESTATE  
Full Service Brokerage  
Trisha Solio, Barry Wing  
726 Centre St.  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
(617) 522-0020

### RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

AM TIKVA  
Boston's Community of Lesbian  
and Gay Jews  
P.O. Box 11  
Cambridge, MA 02238  
Events phone: (617) 782-8894

Metropolitan Community  
Church of Boston  
131 Cambridge St., near Gov't  
Ctr., Sunday Worship 7pm,  
Open to all  
A church of the Lesbian and  
Gay Community, 523-7664

Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation at the 1st Church  
of Roxbury — Sun. 11am  
Service — 445-1277  
at Center, Roxbury & Dudley  
Sts., Rox. Crossing T Stop

### RESTAURANTS

DOWNTOWN CAFE  
12 LaGrange St.  
in Downtown Boston  
(617) 338-7037

### TAXES & FINANCIAL PLANNING

MARJORIE E. POSNER  
Cert. Financial Planner  
33 Ashcroft St.  
Jamaica Pl., MA 02130  
524-7565

### TRAVEL

FOREX TRAVEL  
76 Arlington St  
Boston Park Plaza  
482-2900



# Voyages

Continued from page 13

**Linda:** Now, what did your father think of (1) your studiousness, and (2) your white friends?

**Phil:** My parents are both lawyers, and we were definitely in the upper echelon of the black community — which isn't saying much in the larger community, because the black community is so economically impoverished. They wanted [their children] to do very well, although my father was never real verbal about it. But at the same time, he was always worried that I didn't have enough black friends.

There was also a class issue. Many of the other blacks I knew came from working-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds, so the other people who shared my class background were also white.

Every time I met a black person with whom I felt I shared [a] good bond, I was very excited. And in eleventh grade, I was just thrilled with one [boy] in particular. I realize now that I was completely in love, though I wasn't out to myself as a gay person at all. I brought him home to meet my parents and I really thought they would like him. [But] after he went home, my father said to me very bluntly that he did not like this person, [because] he obviously had homosexual tendencies.

This caused a big turmoil for me for months and months, because I didn't know what to say to this friend of mine. As it turned out, he had much more consciousness than I did about gay issues, and when I finally said to him, "My father thinks you're gay," he said, "Well, I am." I really didn't know what to do! But everything came together for me in this big crisis.

Of course, I thought that once I came out and immersed myself in the gay community, all of that would no longer be a problem, and I would be completely embraced. And I think that worked for a while. Within my first two months at college, I came out and was wholeheartedly and unabashedly gay. But I also didn't think very much about being black anymore, so being black didn't seem to be a problem. But it really was, in all the ways we've talked about.

**Linda:** Kenji, what attitudes have you noticed toward gay people on the part of other Japanese-Americans?

**Kenji:** Typical Japanese is to not discuss it.

**Phil:** Are you out to your parents?

**Kenji:** Oh, yeah.

**Phil:** What does your father say?

**Kenji:** Never anything direct.

*...[S]ometime in the past couple of years I've said, "I am Japanese; I'm very Japanese." [It's been] a process of getting in touch with myself, of loving myself.*

**Linda:** You've said that the people of color at your workshop were furious at the way they were being treated, not only by whites in general, but also within the gay community. You've already given some very striking examples about racism and sexual attraction. What else angers you?

**Phil:** What I'm angry about is feeling invisible within the gay community. I feel [as if] there's a tendency to make gay men and lesbians of color invisible, in ways that are not necessarily conscious on the part of white gays and lesbians.

For instance, I've really been sensitive lately about the way in which people compare gay liberation and the black civil rights movement. I think that's a really valid way to make a strong point. [But] I think [there's] a risk of people thinking that gays and lesbians are one group and blacks are another, [that] there are no such things as black gays and lesbians.

One of the things you read a lot [now] is that the spread of AIDS is slowing down in the gay community but picking up in the black community. I feel like one of the underlying assumptions [about AIDS in minority communities] — not only in the mainstream press but also in the gay press —

is that it's [always] an intravenous drug connection [and never] homosexual transmission.

When *Time* magazine or the *New York Times* or Phil Donahue talks about the gay community, I think what is conjured up in most people's minds is an upwardly mobile, white male population around 35. I don't want people to forget the possibility that any black person they meet may be gay or lesbian.

Another thing that annoys me about race relations is that white people don't have to think about it if they don't want to. I saw a *Frontline* documentary [on TV] called "Racism 101," about racial issues on college campuses. One of the white students [they interviewed] said that he knew racial issues were a problem on campus, but he didn't think about [them] until some incident happened that got black students outraged.

**Linda:** What were some of the other workshop participants angry about?

**Kenji:** One woman spoke about wanting to eat with her friends at a table in the dining hall, just a table of black people. Someone pointed a finger at her and said she was segregating herself and being a snob.

**Phil:** This was the case when I was in college, too. [The whites] didn't have any understanding of the need for community. They interpreted it as a negative reaction to them, as opposed to a positive reaction among the black students.

Another [problem] is homophobia in communities of color. One of the black gay men in the group was saying that his two closest friends at school were two straight black women. But they were about to graduate, and he was just a sophomore, and he was worried about his interactions with other black students once these two friends left.

**Linda:** Did you talk at all about racial issues within long-term gay couples?

**Phil:** We didn't, though I could have, because I have been in a relationship for the last seven years with a white man. Of course, I wouldn't be involved with him if I didn't think he was the most sensitive person in the world, who understands these issues, and isn't afraid to talk about the fact that he's a white person and so he has a particular perspective on things.

I guess that's what it really comes down to, in my mind, for relations between whites and people of color, that there has to be an acknowledgment from whites that they are white. Whatever [your] color may be, [it] gives you a certain perspective on racial issues. You have to constantly admit that to yourself and acknowledge what that perspective is — which is an incredibly difficult thing — and then go on from there.

**Linda:** Are there any final conclusions you'd like to share?

**Phil:** The one thing I get a real sense of is the incredible complexity of the issues. One of the white women at the workshop said she didn't care whether people were male or female, black or white, Asian or hispanic. Everyone was basically the same, and she believed that if everyone had a "color-blind" attitude, problems of racism would go away. A lot of people of color tensed up and jumped on her at that moment.

[Then] one black woman said to her, "You're trying to make this a simple problem, and it's never going to be. And by trying to simplify it, you aren't doing it justice."

What [that] implies is the necessity for continuing work on [these] issues. We [may] have this impulse to not talk about [them], because it's so difficult. It's a human response to want to have a crisis and a resolution, and then to move on to something else. But it doesn't work that way. This really has to be an ongoing dialogue. □

## GENERAL DENTISTRY

JOHN C. BARNA, DMD

790 BOYLSTON STREET  
10 FAIRFIELD PLAZA  
BOSTON, MA 02199  
(617) 353-1500

*Isis Barter Network* A legitimate trade exchange for women - identified - women

A trade exchange is:  
a business that lists other business who are willing to barter for trade credits in lieu of a direct exchange of goods/services. Through a trade exchange you receive many benefits including, higher profits, increased exposure and tax breaks. Redirect the economic force in this country, find out more about Isis by calling...

1-800-426-7164 or 513-767-9190  
via post 113 E. Whiteman St. Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

## No. Mass & So. NH Gay Counseling Services

Gerald Matison, L.I.C.S.W.  
Andover Psychotherapy  
10 High Street  
Andover, MA 01810  
(508) 475-6950

JUDD & MALLEN P.O. Box 613  
Cohasset, MA, 02025  
(617) 383-0791

Auctioneers and Appraisers

Interested in purchase or consignment of single items or entire estates.

# FOREX-ceptional TRAVEL VALUES

Phoenix.....\$268RT  
Albuquerque.....\$318RT  
San Juan.....\$259RT  
San Diego.....\$298RT  
Key West.....\$274RT  
Los Angeles.....\$318RT  
Mexico City.....\$378RT

## FOREX TRAVEL

76 ARLINGTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

482-2900

Serving the Community  
Since 1975

## It's Not Easy To Be A Parent

when you're considering coming out to your children ...when your lover is jealous of your kids...when your 'ex' can't cope with your lifestyle ...when you don't know other gay parents.

It's time to call for help.

## South End Counseling

596 Tremont Street, Boston  
437-9643



## HIT NEW 1988 EDITION



"The 'Les Miz' satire is perfect... it's worth the whole evening!"  
- Kevin Kelly, Boston Globe

# FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1988

"The best edition of Forbidden Broadway I have seen... explosively funny bits!"  
- Joyce Kulhawik, WBZ-TV

"It's delightful!" - John Corcoran, WNEV-TV

"Boffo! You'll love it!" - Dixie Whitley, WCVB

GROUP RATES  
Call 426-4444  
or 542-4701

357-8384  
DINNER/THEATRE  
PACKAGES  
AVAILABLE

THE TERRACE ROOM  
AT THE BOSTON PARK PLAZA

## Venetian Gardens

1269 Mass. Ave.  
Dorchester  
436-9327  
Sun-Wed 11-10  
Thurs, Fri, Sat 11-11

## Under New Management

The Days of the Old Venetian Gardens are Back!!!

American and Italian Specials

Daily and Nightly

Dinner for Two \$14.95

Special Insert Menus

Weekends Prime Rib

Mondays Roast Chicken

Tuesdays Steak Tips

Sirloin Steak

Wednesdays Meatloaf

Liver, Bacon & Onions

Thursdays Corned Beef & Cabbage

## Take Out or Eat In Newly Decorated Dining Room

We accept Mastercard, Visa, Am. Express



## PERSONALS

## GCN REPLY BOXES

Replies to GCN Boxes should be addressed to GCN Box #, Gay Community News, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116. This applies to GCN Boxes only, not to P.O. Boxes. Mail may be addressed to GCN Boxes for four weeks after the issue in which it appears.

WGF 39, professional, bilingual, strong psyche, yet sensual, intense, caring, with good sense of humor, looking for a loving lady for a lasting passionate monogamous relationship. Drugs; one-night stands; childish mind-playing games out of the question. Prefer non-smoker. Social drinker, ok. Emotional stability; maturity and a well established identity a must. Let's be bold, assert, commit. Let's fall in love for the rest of our lives. GCN Box 345. (31)

LF 33, warm, sensual, creative, swimmer, activist in gay and progressive politics, seeks LFs with integrity for dates, romance, casual sex. If you like music, dancing, films, novels, travel, exploring the city, beach walks, write GCN Box 346. (33)

Isolated GWM, 28, friendly, aware, educated, seeks similar contacts. PO Box 966, Youngstown, OH, 44501. Please write soon! (33)

## O BRAWNY HUFFIN

Would love to bed down with you in your hiking boots, but will settle for your bookish best. Still be my heart. J.-Sue. (31)

## ANT STUART

You wouldn't believe what a little birdie said about you and me on Valentines Day! Do you eat fowl/foul? Acid House rules, ok? xo. (31)

## FATHERHOOD!

Lesbian seeking healthy gay man to father child. Interest in the child desired. Financial help not desired. Write KG, Box 335, Back Bay Annex, Boston MA 02117. (31)

## F COUPLES

Looking for other F couples who like to play cards and other games for fun! Lexington or surrounding area. Call 861-7234. (31)

GWF 22, bright, attractive-seeking one special woman, 28-40, to share my warmth and affection. I am monogamous, sensitive and have much to offer someone who is willing to take a chance. Please write GCN Box 344. (32)

Dapper bearded dyke desires intense friendship, lovship with mentally and physically strong adventurous political lesbian lunatic no druggies smokers or cops need apply, GCN Box 343. (31)

## BAD ATTITUDE

A lesbian sex magazine. Irreverent and Hot! \$10 for one year's subscription (3 issues). B.A. Inc., P.O. Box 110, Cambridge, MA 02139. (16.33)

GCN's circulation manager is looking for a volunteer to help set up the Friday evening mailing party. Learn about the exciting world of newspaper circulations and meet the fabulous Friday staff and volunteers. Please call Chris at GCN, 426-4469.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WOMEN'S CRAFT MARKET

Celebrating International Women's Day, Sat., March 4 and Sat. 11, 11am-5pm. Downstairs, 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge. (33)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## AIDS AND ARC PATIENTS

New from China, 100% Natural pure enzyme that kills harmful bacteria and virus. \$39.95 — one month supply. \$99 — 3 month supply. Money back guarantee. Nutri Rite, 2269 So. University Dr., Davie, Fla. 33324, Suite 229. (33)

## CALENDAR HEAVEN (YEP!)

GCN REALLY REALLY needs a volunteer calendar coordinator/s — one person 5 hrs. a week or two people to split the job. You'll know *everything* that's happening before *everyone* else!! Call Steph at (617) 426-4469. (31)

## LESBIANA

Antiquarian books for sale. Current list features Lesbiana. We specialize in all areas of Women's Studies. Send \$1 to Women's Words Books. Rte. 4, Box 322, Hopkinton, NH 03229. (31)

## GET PUBLISHED!

GCN's news dept. seeks a volunteer to write news notes. News writing experience not necessary. 5 hr/week (flexible). Call Jennie at 426-4469 for more info. (C)

## SERVICES

## FIRST IN HEALTH CARE

SERVING THE GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY SINCE 1971

## FENWAY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

General Medicine • Counseling • Helpline  
• HIV Outpatient Treatment • Research •  
HIV Education & Testing • Massage  
• Sexually Transmitted Disease Treatment •  
Women's Health • Alternative Insemination  
• Gay & Lesbian Family & Parenting Service •  
Victim Recovery Program

MEDICAL HIV TESTING HELPLINE  
267-7573 267-0159 267-9001

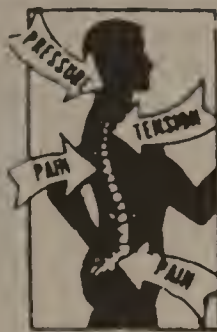
16 Haviland St • Boston • 617-267-7573  
medical • business

93 Mass Ave • Boston • 617-267-0900  
counseling • research • education

BACK BAY COUNSELING SERVICES  
DENNIS IADAROLA

Serving the Community Since 1974  
Insurance Accepted  
739-7860

## SERVICES

Dr. Jonathan D. Stein  
Chiropractor

Treatment of: Neck and shoulder pain, Headaches, Low back pain, Bursitis, Acute and Chronic Musculoskeletal conditions resulting from occupational stress and nervous tension.

Evening and Saturday Appts.  
Available, 232-7200

375 Harvard St., Brookline, MA

## GAYELLOW PAGES

INFORMING THE GAY COMMUNITY SINCE 1973 Accommodations, AA groups, bars, baths, bookstores, businesses, counselors, dentists, doctors, hotels, lawyers, mail order, media, publications, organizations, religious groups, services, social groups, switchboards, therapists, travel agents, etc., etc., etc. (area codes and zip codes too!)

USA & CANADA \$10

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY \$4.50; includes Manhattan bar notes & women's section

SOUTHERN EDITION \$4.50; Alabama, Arkansas, N & S Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

NORTHEAST EDITION \$4.50; Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, W. Virginia

Renaissance House, Box 292GCN Village Station, NY, NY 10014 212-674-0120. All books discreetly by first class mail, your name kept strictly confidential. To list a business or organization, or for further information, send stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope. Please contact us for prices outside the USA. In Canada, order from Glad Day Books, 598 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1Z3 416-961-4161 (check for prices)

Ask us about Gayellow Pages on mailing labels!

**DLC**

**DAVID L. COLLINS  
C.L.U.**

**Insurance  
for all your needs**

Congress St.  
Box 1762  
Boston, MA 02105

Orleans/Brewster  
Office Park  
E. Orleans, MA 02643  
255-2600

Call toll-free 1-800-352-3185

## PERSONAL HEALTH

•General Medical Care •Sports Medicine  
•Diagnosis and Treatment of Disease  
Private Medical Office • Confidential

ROBERT TAYLOR, MD

1755 Beacon Street, Brookline 232-1459.

The Law Offices of  
**David R. Lund  
& Associates,  
P.C.**

David R. Lund,  
Barbara Macy, Therese A. Young

Boston  
(617) 266-0760

## SERVICES

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER

Organizing kitchens to complete households as well as Domestic Staff Training. Write to: W.B. Rich, Inc., 606 W. Barry St., Suite 168, Chicago, Ill. 60657. (31)

## GODIAS HERBS

Herbal therapies for the immune system and carrisyn. P.O. Box 2023 Gloucester, MA 01930 or call 617-522-4094. (32)

•INDIVIDUAL  
GROUP/COUPLE  
•GAY SENSITIVE  
THERAPY

**ALLAN SINGER,  
L.I.C.S.W.  
PSYCHOTHERAPIST**

**COPLEY SQUARE  
BOSTON, MA  
617-266-2240**

HEALTH INSURANCE ACCEPTED

**VIDA K. BERKOWITZ  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
In Practice Since 1975**

## General Practice

\*Family Law

\*Real Estate Transfers

\*Consumer/Small Business

## Employment

\*Discrimination

\*Unemployment

\*Worker's Comp

**52 Western Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 876-7099**

## HELP WANTED

## BROADWAY BICYCLE SCHOOL HIRING

Bikeshop needs help for season or longer. Shop experience preferred but will train. Retail or restaurant experience useful. People of color and people of women encouraged to apply. Please call (617) 868-3392. (32)

## FREE APT. PLUS \$650/MONTH CLEAR SALARY

Work 2 3-day weekends per month (and provide emergency back-up coverage half-time) as a personal care attendant for a Jamaica Plain dynamo disabled lesbian. Must be able to lift, drive, and not smoke on shift. Involves personal care and integrity. Will train. Connie, (617) 524-0921. (35)

Attendant for disabled lesbian art therapist. Wednesday 8:30am through Friday 8:30am (48 hrs.) \$200 clear. Lifting, driving, personal care. Light sleeper, non-smoker preferred. Call 524-0921. (35)

## AIDS AND ADDICTION COORDINATOR

Innovative AIDS and addiction pilot program is hiring a program coordinator to join its traveling team. The coordinator is responsible for direct care, education, and referral services for male and female clients with HIV infection/AIDS who are in substance abuse rehabilitation programs throughout metropolitan Boston.

This position requires experience in the alcoholism/substance abuse recovery field with a special commitment to people seeking addiction recovery who are also diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Excellent communication and organizational skills, collaborative working style, and ability to handle a range of responsibilities. Competitive salary and benefits.

Send Resume to: Jonathan Scott, Executive Director, Victory House, Inc., 566 Massachusetts Ave., PO Box 365, Boston, MA 02118. Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. (31)

## PART-TIME PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT

Many positions available as PCA or back-up PCA for a disabled writer. Helping me to shower, dress. No lifting, but prefer those with strength or balance. I live in J.P. \$7.10 per hour. No taxes. Call (617) 232-5956. Let it ring. (33)

## Live in Housekeeper

Year round position available for women's guest house, call Gabriel's at (508) 487-3232. (33)

## SHIPPING

Packing and shipping books, some other responsibilities, for gay publisher. Part-time or full-time position available. Non-smoking office. \$6/hour plus benefits (if full-time). Phone Joe, 542-5679. (32)

## Gay Community News classifieds

My heading is

## FLAMER!

Max. 20 characters

## BOLD

Max. 30 characters

My text is: (each box is for one word)


Need more room? Just keep writing on a separate sheet of paper at a cost of 25¢ per word (35¢ per word for business ads).

## Basic cost.

☐ Non-business: \$6 for 1st 25 words; 25¢ for each additional word.

☐ Business: \$8 for 1st 25 words; 35¢ for each additional word.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per ad x \_\_\_\_\_ number of runs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Special heading

☐ Flamer (\$3.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ number of runs) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Bold (\$1.50 x \_\_\_\_\_ number of runs) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total cost before discounts (add) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Discounts

☐ 10-20 consecutive weeks. Deduct 10% \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 21-30 consecutive weeks. Deduct 15% \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 31 + consecutive weeks. Deduct 20% \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I'm going to subscribe now. Deduct \$2 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Box service

☐ Pick-up box. \$4 for 6 weeks \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Forwarding box. \$6 for 6 weeks \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Subscriptions

☐ I want to subscribe! \$ \_\_\_\_\_

US: \$33. Institutional rate: \$40.

## Display Boxed Classifieds

☐ \$15 per column inch

\_\_\_\_\_ inches x \$15 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## My category is:

☐ PERSONALS ☐ ANNOUNCEMENTS ☐ HELP WANTED  
☐ ROOMMATE WANTED ☐ HOUSING WANTED  
☐ APARTMENTS ☐ SUMMER RENTALS ☐ RESORTS  
☐ FOR SALE ☐ PUBLICATIONS ☐ ORGANIZATIONS  
☐ SERVICES ☐ RIDES ☐ MOVERS ☐ OTHER

•Deadline: Tuesday 12 noon for each Friday's edition.

•All ads must be prepaid.

•No ads accepted over telephone.

•Clip and return this form to:

GCN Classifieds  
62 Berkeley St.  
Boston, MA 02116

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_



# CLASSIFIEDS

## HELP WANTED

Receptionist for active holistic five-person medical office. Needed: good inter-personal skills and problem solving. 16-20 hours/week. \$7.00/hour. One year commitment. Call Sheila M/Tu/Th 625-8840. Also needed: computer billing person. Must be organized, quick to learn, good with details. Third-party billing experience helpful. Computer/accounts receivable experience useful. 15-22 hours/week. \$8.50/hour. Call Nancy 625-8840. (35)

### LIVE-IN OR PART-TIME

Personal Care Attendants to assist female professional disabled activist and friendly cat in JP. No experience necessary but must have driver's license. Live-in \$225/week. Weekdays 5-10pm \$177/week. Weekends \$160. Call 731-6228. (33)

### ADVERTISING SALES

Excellent part-time openings marketing advertising for america's premiere gay & lesbian newsweekly, *GAY COMMUNITY NEWS*. Ad reps receive high commission, leads and staff support. Work can be done from your home. If you are assertive, responsible, and interested in sales, call the Advertising Coordinator at (617) 426-4469, or write to GCN 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, Mass 02116.

### Community Jobs

The only nationwide listing of socially conscious job opportunities — organizing, women's issues, health care, peace/justice, more. \$12/year. CJ, Box G, 1516 P Street, Washington, DC 20005. (Ex)

## ROOMMATE WANTED

Camb/Som — 2 great and amusing LFs seek 3rd responsible, considerate one for nice apartment on quiet street near 'T'. No smoking or pets. \$342-plus, 776-6158. (31)  
LF needs housemate to share lge Victorian on 2-plus acres near Townsend, MA. Use of washer, dryer, pool. No alcohol/drugs, smoking o.k. Easy commute to Nashua, NH, Worcester, Boston. Call (508) 386-7334. \$440 per month. (32)

### JAMAICA PLAIN SUBLET

2 LF's seek 3rd housemate for large, beautiful Victorian apartment near JP Licks. Non-smoking, vegetarian; deck, backyard, W/D, dishwasher; Have cats, no more pets. Sublet 3/1 thru 5/1, 6/1. Approx. \$400 htd. Anne: 522-6561. (32)

3LF seek 4th for spacious Watertown apt. on busline. No pets or heavy drugs or alcohol. \$200-plus per month. 926-8258. (31)

### BEAUTIFUL WATERTOWN SUITE!

Professional woman seeks same to share lovely Victorian, block from bus. Your own huge fireplaced living room, bedroom, bath, separate entrance, off-street parking. Available March 1 or later, short- or long-term. An aesthetic delight! 923-4144. (31)

### BROOKLINE NEAR GREEN LINE T

GM seeks roommate. Large 2BR. Quiet, cable, reasonable rent. Utilities included. Parking available. Prefer non-smoker into the 12 steps. Available 3/1 566-5902, leave message. (31)

2 LFs looking for 3rd to share sunny JP semi-coop apt. near T and Arboreum. \$335-plus. Pets ok, smoking is not. Call 522-4368 (31)

Medford, GWF to share comfortable 6-room house with GWF. \$400 plus 1/2 utilities. Call 395-0074 afternoons between 1-4pm. (31)

## TRY GCN'S GUARANTEED ROOMMATE AD

GCN's "Guaranteed Roommate" offer:  
**ALL ROOMMATE AND HOUSEMATE ADS THAT ARE PREPAID FOR TWO WEEKS WE WILL RUN UNTIL YOU FIND A ROOMMATE**

Ads will not be automatically renewed. You must call in every additional week you want the ad to run. Phone calls will be accepted all day Mondays and Tuesdays until noon. 426-4469.

Seeking LF — 28 plus, semi-vegetarian nonsmoking, clean, communicative, friendly, stable to share 3 bedroom, sunny, spacious home with LF31 - quiet, creative, healer. 2 rooms or 1 available. Belmont-Camb. line. Debra: 484-1553. (31)

2LF seek 3rd for large Brighton apartment in house. No smoking, vegetarian, must love pets, no more please. \$300 plus. Call (617) 254-0407. (31)

2LF friends seek roommate 25-plus L/Bi for our happy Somerville house. Large, sunny, homey, 3 BR, drug/smoke-free. \$300-plus. Call 623-5535. (31)

## APARTMENTS

### LOWELL AREA

3-room apt. heated, for rent. Refrigerator and stove furnished. Utilities not included. Rent \$375.00 month. Woman preferred. Non-smoker. Call (508) 454-5249 before 10am or after 4pm. (31)

Dorchester two bedroom apt., large closets, harbor views, quiet street. \$640.00 includes heat, h/w, elec, washer and dryer. Call 436-8490. Owner occupied on Jones Hill. (32)

## APARTMENTS

### A REAL HOME

Sun-filled 2 bedroom duplex with hardwood floors in Victorian 2 family. Quiet tree-lined street 2 blocks to Ashmont T. 20 minute drive tp Back Bay. \$800 includes heat and off-street parking. Available immediately, call owner 288-1587. (33)

### J.P. SUBLET

Furnished 4 room apartment mid-March through June. Dates negotiable. Cheap Cheap Cheap. Call 524-0857. Leave message. (32)

### MELVILLE AVENUE DORCHESTER

A grand apartment in restored Victorian. Beautifully detailed rooms laid out for entertaining include wood paneled and beamed living room. Two large bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths, tons of closets. Near Shawmut Red Line. \$1100 heated. 436-3014. References, first and security. (32)

### Somerville

Spacious, sunny, 2 BR Apt. in Winterhill. New K and B, 5 min to Sullivan Sq. T, walk to shopping. \$700/mo., plus util. Avail. 3/1/89. Call 628-4074, leave message.

## FOR SALE

1986 Chevy Chevette 2 dr hatchback less than 25K miles. Original owner, car never abused, always taken care of. Have all repair and maintenance receipts. Alarm, a/c, rear window defogger, tinted windows, AM/FM stereo cassette with clock and electronic tune. New standard transmission, clutch, brakes, tune-up. Great little transportation car. Runs like a top. 524-2401. (34)

## VACATIONS

### ALL MALE!

Florida — Hollywood House Resort. A tropical setting located in central Hollywood, Florida. Minutes from bars and beach. Rooms, efficiencies, 1-2 bedrm apts. Low nitely, weekly and monthly rates avail. Pool, clubhouse, and laundry facility. Call (305) 920-2372. (40)

### RAYNOR'S MOTOR LODGE

A modern motel in the heart of the White Mountain Ski Area for gays. We are located along the Gale River in the picturesque village of Franconia, NH. Ski Cannon Mountain with Peter or simply enjoy our mountain views. Write: Box 10, Franconia, NH 03580 or call 1-800-634-8187. Peter and Dieter, Innkeepers. (32)

### A GAY COUNTRY INN

Come ski our miles of cross-country trails and then unwind in our hot tub or in front of a crackling fire. Our 100 scenic acres and 19 cozy rooms are just what you need. Inexpensive, uncrowded downhill skiing nearby. Great mid-week discounts! THE HIGHLANDS INN, Box 118G, Bethlehem, NH 03574, (603) 869-3978. Grace and Judi, Innkeepers. (35)

## GCN SPECIALS

### DICTIONARIES NEEDED!

The average educational level of prisoners is junior high school (meaning that many haven't even finished elementary school). Both because they have "time" now and because they need to understand the pretentious "legalese" and other language of the system, they need dictionaries.

Please consider keeping an eye out for "deals" and picking up a few for us to send out. THANKS!

GCN News and Features writers need cassette recorders. If you have a working one that you're not using, or want to donate one, it would be well used. Thank you.

## PUBLICATIONS

### OFF OUR BACKS

Lively, down-to-earth feminism in the nation's oldest women's newsjournal. Analysis, reviews, conference coverage, and news — on health, feminist theory, reproductive rights, civil rights, and political work among working, disabled, incarcerated, old, and poor women, women of color, lesbians, and women from every continent. \$15/11 issues. Trial sub: \$4/3 issues. oob, Dept. GCN, 2423 18th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. (ex)

### WOMEN'S REVIEW OF BOOKS

monthly review of current feminist writing. Since 1983. Our readers span the U.S., Canada, and abroad. Subscriptions: \$15/U.S., \$18/Canada, \$25/institutions. Free sample issue on request. THE WOMEN'S REVIEW, Wellesley Women's Research Center, Wellesley, MA 02181. (ex)

### BLACK/OUT

Special 10th Anniv. edition of Black/Out now available. This bi/annual magazine from the National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays contains essays, reviews, poetry, news and announcements concerning the Black Lesbian and Gay community. Sample copy \$6 plus \$1 postage. 1 year subscription (2 issues) \$10 to Black/Out c/o NCBLG, 19641 West Seven Mile, Detroit, MI 48219. (ex)

### LESBIAN CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. Quarterly of commentary, analysis, reviews, cartoons & humor by and for women who agree to disagree—who are still political, but not necessarily correct. Sample \$1.50; sub \$6; more if/less if. LesCon, 584 Castro, #263G, SF, CA 94114. (16--)

**GUARDIAN:**Independent radical newsweekly. Covers Gay, women and minority struggles and international progressive movements. Special offer-4 issues FREE. Write Guardian, Dept GCN, 33W 17th St. NY, NY, 10011. (ex)

### OUTRAGEOUS WOMEN

A journal of woman-to-woman s/m. Fantasy, analysis, erotic art and much more. Sub: \$13/four issues. Single issues \$4. Must state you are over 18. SASE for info. PO Box 23, Somerville MA 02143. (ex)

**WOMAN OF POWER:** "A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics," an inspiring international quarterly publication. Subscriptions \$22 for 4 issues; singles issues \$6 plus \$1 postage. P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238, telephone (617) 625-7885. (ex)

**ON OUR BACKS,** the sexual entertainment magazine for lesbians, is 48 pages of erotic fiction, features, plus timely sexual advice and news columns. We are quarterly, national, unique and provocative. \$15/yr sub or \$5 current issue 10: On Our Backs, PO Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142. (ex)

## ORGANIZATIONS

### LIKE TO READ!

Good books deserve good conversation. If you'd like to share both with a group of fun, literate men, call Gus 277-8719. (32)

### OLDER LESBIAN ENERGY

Social and support group for women over 40. P.O. Box 1214, East Arlington, MA 02174. (15.48)

### BLACK AND WHITE MEN TOGETHER

Multiracial group for all people. Call (415) 431-1976 or write BWMT, suite 140, 584 Castro St. SF, CA, 94114. (16.1)

### BOSTON ALLIANCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH

Social support group for youth 22 and under. Wed. night general meeting from 7:30-9pm. New persons meeting at 6:00. Women's meeting at 6:45. Call 523-7363 for info. (15.32)

### MAN/BOY LOVE

Intergenerational Love Support Group. World wide news, art, opinions. Application, information free. Bulletin \$1.00 NAMBLA, P.O. Box 1923, St. Louis, Missouri, 63118. (7)

## Prisoners Seeking Friends

TO ALL THOSE, IN & OUT OF PRISON, WHO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR BONDAGE.

Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*

### INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS —

Quarterly Interchange, a new journal, provides all men with a forum for developing interracial and cross cultural relationships. \$10 per ad of 40 words or less. Address: Q.I., Box 42502, San Francisco CA 94101.

### BLACK & WHITE MEN TOGETHER

is a gay men's organization for men of all colors. They have groups in many cities. They don't always have prisoner support projects, but they should, no? So drop them a line and encourage them to get involved and help fight racism in the Amerikkkan prison business. For more info write: BWMT, 584 Castro St, San Francisco CA 94114, or MACT. (Men of All Colors Together), Box 148, New York, NY 10023.

The NATIVE PRISONERS RIGHTS COMMITTEE will soon open an art gallery for Native American prisoners' art work. Proceeds from this gallery will be a 50/50 split. Half of sales will be returned to prisoners or cultural groups inside the prisons. We hope this will be a good fundraiser for groups who are raising money for Pow wows, etc. The other half will go to NPRC for such costs as advertisement, wall rental, framing, display cases etc.

If interested please write: Native Prisoners Rights Committee, 930 Walnut St, Chico, CA 95928



I'm an incarcerated Black Male who needs correspondence and friendship badly. I'm 33, interesting, open-minded, Gay, caring, and all those other nice things rolled up into one package. Please send letters to: Wayne JOHNSON, 188-030, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699

Black male, 32, enjoy reading and writing, good conversations, outdoor life, and most of all meeting new and interesting people. Seeking a penpal with a sense of humor and understanding. Michael SCHLESINGER, 104625, Camp C Jag I-R-I, Angola LA 70712.

I'm Erica, a 19 yr old, very pretty queen looking for mr. right. My hobbies are: yoga, heavy metal, paralegal work, and sex. I'm too femme for the general population here so they have me in 'protection'(isolation). Please write. Ray PERDOMO, Box 70273, ASPC-CU, Florence AZ 85232.

Thank you for letting me get GCN. It means more to me than you perhaps realize. I'll be getting this out this year after a long time in here. I'm a nature girl, 100 percent female in nature, 5'2", 103 lbs, delicate boned and petite, and desperately needing to make some friends for when I'm out. Can we talk? Melissa Lynn. [Gary ALLEN, 19249-149, Tenn Unit 118, PO Box 34550, Memphis TN 38184.

26 yr old gay male, very easy going, like men, housecleaning, cooking, laundry, sex, movies, and quiet moments. Would love to hear from you hot guys out there. Richard NICHOLS, PO Box 629—64084, Florence AZ 85232.

Sexy, Spanish, Pre-Op TS, 24, coming home soon. No family or friends outside. Would like to meet Gentlemen and other TVs and TSs. Francesca FERNANDEZ, 85A 5102, Box 51, Comstock NY 12821.

I'm a 4-wheel drive enthusiast. Also like horseback riding the outdoors. Would like to have someone to write to. Roger WEST, 152314, 1012 W. Columbia Rd, Farmington MO 63640.

## MOVERS

### POOR PEOPLES MOVERS

new & used boxes delivered  
packing and storing  
522-4476

### THE JIM CLARK MOVING COMPANY

Serving the Gay Community with professionalism and respect  
Very careful furniture movers.  
Piano and hoisting specialists.  
Any time of the day-any day of the year.  
No overtime charges, 354-2184  
MPDU Number 23733

### APPLETON MOVING CO., INC.

(formerly, Boston Trucking Co.)

MA DPU#25522

No job too big or too small  
Very careful movers 641-1234

From \$18 / hr.

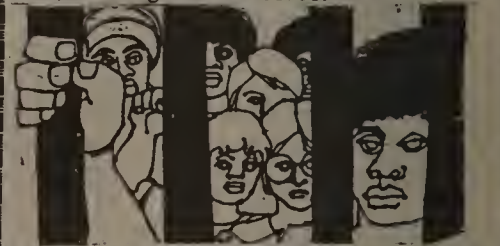
- MAXI-VANS
- CARGO MASTER TRUCKS
- HOMES • BUSINESSES
- 24 HOUR DELIVERY
- LIC. and INS.

236-1848



GF, 34, seeks correspondence from women of all age groups and ethnic backgrounds. I'm interested in hearing from you if you are sincere and not looking for game players. I'm looking for honest friendship. Deborah BAUMGARTNER, 118582, PO Box 26, St. Gabriel LA 70776

I would like to have a penpal write to me. My hobbies are dancing, going for long walks and very intimate nights with us 2. I go to school for Dental Assistants. Tinamarie EVANS, Box 9007, Framingham MA 01701.



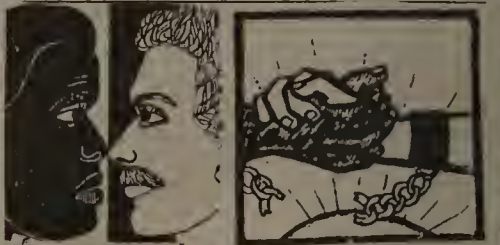
Looking for TVs and TSs to write to me. Looking for tall, long legged slender bodied ones. Come on you people. Have a heart and write to a lonely man who needs to love. Send a revealing photo. James CANNON, PO Box 129759, L-1-18/2, Reidsville GA 30499

### Anyone who don't mind writing!

I'm a 33 yr old black Gay person doing time and I'm in need of some kind of corresponding from someone out in the free world. I really would appreciate writing to anyone who don't mind writing. Rudolph STEVENSON, 040345, F South 10-B, 3950 Tiger Bay Rd, Daytona Beach FL 32014.

Myself I used to be Trisexual, meaning that I would Try anything at least once, or twice, or? Ha, ha! I'm a bi-male, 36yrs young, looking to meet a bi-male with a good sense of humor. I'm a good listener and not afraid to show affection. Am not critical of other people. Allowed to write other prisoners except in Conn. John CERMAK, 119939, Box 100 (E/89), Somers CT 06071

I'm a regular reader of your paper and must admit it has had quite an influence on the way I look at people. I am a Black guy with a great sense of humor and a helluva caring personality and quite handsome and tall and pecan skinned and I'd like to write someone. All colors and ages are acceptable. Eddie COLLINS, D-32036, B unit B-4, Reidsville GA 30499.



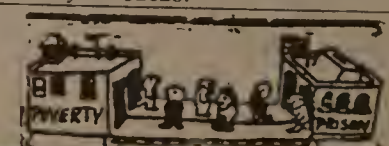
I need to write to someone that is not locked up. I need a man in my life. I'm 34, Black, and I'll be very happy to have a friend to write. Please write. Michael HOWARD, A188929, PO Box 56, Lebanon OH 45036.

Black male, 31 years young, weight lifter. To find out more write me. You wouldn't regret it. I need love too. Let's go for all the gusto! Gerald BOUTTE, 93799, Fox 4-C, PO Box 174, St Gabriel LA 70776

I go by the name 'Candy', and am submissive but enjoy both sides of the track. Born in Penn. but migrated to Fla. I enjoy keeping in shape, music, reading, woodworking and sex, (and most of all well lubricated and well running friendships). I can't write prisoners. Mark SCOTT, A-235577 Slot 544, PO Box 1100, Avon Park FL 33825.

Bi-Hisp Male, 30, desires to know whether there are any real people out there in Society. I am lonely and seeking correspondence. Rene RODRIGUEZ, 87A 7242, PO Box 149, Attica NY 14011.

David Johnson: I was transferred because of lies that were told on me. Please place my name back on the penpal list and tell EDDIE REED I still love you Regardless. Write Sharron soon. Tom from Avenel please write too. David JOHNSON, C-073738, PO Box 1500 (MB 84), Cross City FL 32628.





# Calendar

Ellen Shub

**Please note: Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos with listings are encouraged. Please specify if your event is or is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted.**

## 18 Saturday

**Boston** □ Greater Boston chapter of the **Imperial Court** meeting. 2-4:30pm. Info: 617/497-8282 (weeknights).

**Boston** □ **Planist Adrienne Torf** performs at Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 8pm. Through 2/19. \$10/12. Info: 617/536-0972.

**Boston** □ **Rite Wings: the Golden Rule of the Sun**, a media performance on the Gay Rights Referendum, Dade County, Florida, 1977. Tower Auditorium, Mass. College of Art, 621 Huntington Ave. Through 2/19. 8pm (3pm on 2/19). \$8, \$5 students, seniors. Info: 617/232-1555 x355.

**Boston** □ **Prime Timers**, an organization of older gay males, meets at Lindemann Health Ctr, 25 Staniford St. 2-4pm. Rap on group goals, refreshments, socializing, \$1.

**Boston** □ **Art Therapy** for people who've tested positive for HIV. Organizational meeting. 2pm. Info: Steve, 617/524-2967.

**Provincetown** □ **AIDS: Health and Survival Strategies**, a video of the Oct. '88 conference. Features Tom O'Connor, author of "Living with AIDS," Nathaniel Pier, a NY doctor who treats hundreds of PWAs and more. PWA Coalition Offices, 155 Bradford St. Info: 508/487-3998.

**Hollis, N.H.** □ **N.H. Gay Pride Valentine Dinner Dance**. Swing with Cheek to Cheek and Disco with Disco Jack. All proceeds go to 1989 NH Pride. 7pm-1am. \$20 (includes buffet) Info: 603-382-9398.

## 19 Sunday

**Lowell** □ **Gay in the Merrimac Valley** Monthly potluck. 1st Grace Fellowship Hall (Unitarian), 225 Stedman St. Unit No. 31, 01851. Host needed. Info: 508/452-4686.

**Provincetown** □ **AIDS, Love, Sex, Intimacy**: male couples facing AIDS, relationships in the age of AIDS, and lust and love. A video and discussion at PWA Coalition Offices, 155 Bradford St., 3pm. Info: 508/487-3998.

## 21 Tuesday

**Boston** □ **Living Well Workshop**: "Legal Aspects of HIV." Fenway Community Health Center, 16 Haviland St. 6-8pm. Info: 617/267-0900.

**Boston** □ **Gay Fathers of Greater Boston** discuss weekend Dads and age-appropriate activities for kids. Lindeman Ctr, 25

## 23 Thursday

**Boston** □ **GCN's production night**. All welcome. Proof-reading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

**Boston** □ **Drop-In Night for Women Concerned about AIDS**. Fenway Community Health Center, 93 Mass. Ave., 3rd floor. Wheelchair access. 6:30-8pm. Info: 617/267-0900.

**Boston** □ **Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders** and the **Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Bar Association** will have a public reception for lawyers newly admitted to the Massachusetts Bar and lesbian and gay law students. 106 Bedford St. 6-8pm. Info: 517/426-1350.

**Boston** □ **Alive with AIDS**, a musical exploration will open at Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. Info: 617/536-0972.

**Jamalca Plain** □ **Lesbian and Gay Neighbors Open House**. Centre St. Area. 7-9pm. Info: John, 617/522-0876.

## 24 Friday

**Boston** □ **GCN mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

**Providence** □ **South East Gay And Lesbian Country Dance Series**. Body Lab, 566 S. Main St. 8-11pm. \$5. Info: Chris, 401/431-0822.

## 25 Saturday

**Roxbury** □ **Gaylaxian Science Fiction Society** meets at 1pm. Topic: Reading and discussion of "The Eye of Argon." Info: The Gaylaxians, Box 1051, Boston, MA 02117.

## 26 Sunday

**Boston** □ **Italian American Lesbian Potluck Brunch**. 11am-3pm. Info: (Marianne) 617/522-8768.

**Cambridge** □ **Sarah Laughs** performs at the Middle East Cafe, 472 Mass. Ave. (Central Square). 9pm. Info: 617/354-8238.

**Boston** □ **ACT-UP** open house in the Piemonte room of City Hall. 3-7pm. (see also weekly listings).

**Cambridge** □ **Asian Lesbian Potluck** sponsored by the AMALGAM (Alliance of Mass. Asian Lesbians and Gay Men). The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7pm. Info: 617/499-9535.

**Malden** □ **Lesbian Faculty Members** for Lesbian academics. Potluck/Meeting. 4pm. Near Orange line. Info: 617/321-3569 (Karen).

**Boston** □ **Lesbians In Nursing**. Potluck: New group. 6pm. Info: 617/623-3636. (Betsy).

**Boston** □ **Chiltern Mountain Club**. Crew Organizational Meeting: Recreational rowing for women and men. Hot cider and discussion on Gay Games in Vancouver. First-timers to old-timers. 8pm. Info: 617/787-9154.

**Jamalca Plain** □ **Lesbian and Gay Neighbors Open House**. Forest Hills area. 7-9pm. Info: 617/524-6826.

## 27 Monday

**Cambridge** □ Opening of **March On**, an art show sponsored by ART/WORD Association, later to be installed at the Hospice at Mission Hill, a facility for AIDS patients. Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 2nd St. Info: 617/577-1400.

## 28 Tuesday

**Boston** □ **Living Well Workshop** "Introduction to Nutrition." All welcome but may have more relevance to those who are HIV positive. 16 Haviland St. 6pm. Info: 617/267-0900.

## 1 Wednesday

**Cambridge** □ **Visions for Lesbian and Gay Activism in the 90's**, a forum sponsored by Mass ACT OUT. ASL. Braun Room, Harvard Divinity School, 45 Francis Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Donation requested. Info: 617/661-7737.

## 2 Thursday

**Boston** □ **GCN's production night**. All welcome. Proof-reading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

26 Sunday □ David Johnson, Co-Chair of the AIDS Action Committee's Multi-cultural Concerns Committee, discusses AIDS in the Black community on "Boston's Other Voice." WROR 98.5FM. 11pm.

## Weekly Events

### Saturday

**Boston** □ The **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** is planning a new training session for individuals to work on their 24 hour hotline. Info: 617/492-8306.

**Cambridge** □ **SANCHIN Women's School of Karate and Self Defense** Ongoing beginning classes for women of all ages and abilities. YWCA, 7 Temple St. 3-5pm. Tue. and Thur. 6-8pm. Info: 617/547-3889.

**Boston** □ **Living With AIDS Theatre Project** workshop. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

**Boston** □ Women's Self-Defense Collective **Women's Self-Defense Classes** All ages and abilities. Meets Wed. eves., Sat. afternoons in South End. Info: 617/574-9433.

### Sunday

**Boston** □ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY)**. Open to all interested youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. Sunday drop-in: 2-5pm. Info: 617/354-6658.

**Brookline** □ **Swing and Ballroom Dance Classes** for Lesbians and Gay men. 1/8-3/5. 1636A Beacon St. Beginners. 7:30-8:30; Advanced, 8:30-9:30. \$55-60. Info: 617/522-1444.

**Boston** □ Metro Healing healing group for everyone. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 617/426-9205.

**Boston** □ "Boston's Other Voice," radio for the Gay and Lesbian community. 2/19 the difficulties and opportunities of interracial relationships. 2/26 David Johnson talks about AIDS in the black community. WROR 98.5 FM. 11:00pm. (new time)

### Monday

**Boston** □ **Straight Talk About Disabilities**, February program on Segregation. March program on Employment. M/W nights at 7:30pm, Channel A-22.

**Cambridge** □ **Healing Circle** group healing. 5 Upland Rd., Porter Square. 7:30-9:30pm. \$5 suggested. Info: 617/864-1989.

**Cambridge** □ **Lesbian Rap**. Topics: 2/20 Portrayal of lesbians in the media. 2/27 Lesbian Parenting. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

### Tuesday

**Boston** □ **Lesbian and Gay Concert and Marching Band**. No audition necessary. YWCA, 120 Clarendon St. 7:15 p.m. Info: Joe 617/625-3304, Zoe 617/396-2989.

**Providence, RI** □ **ACT-UP/Rhode Island** open meetings. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. Info: Bill 617/782-9063.

**Roxbury** □ **ACT UP/Boston** meets to confront the AIDS crisis. Room 345, Bldg. 3, Roxbury Community College. 7:00pm. Info: 617/49-ACT UP.

**Cambridge** □ **30-plus Lesbian Rap** 2/21 Relationships with parents. 2/28 Shyness. 7-8:30pm. The Women's Center (see above).

### Wednesday

**Boston** □ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY)**. Open to all interested youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New person's meeting: 6pm; Women's and Men's issues meet separately 6:45-7:30. General Meeting at 7:30pm. Info: 617/354-6658.

**Boston** □ New group forming for **Lesbians who have been sexually harassed at work**. Wednesdays or Thursdays. Info: 617/492-7273.

**Cambridge** □ "Say It Sister!" WMBR, 88.1 FM. 7-8pm.

**Boston** □ **Women's Self-Defense Classes** for women of all ages and abilities. See Sat. listing.

**Cambridge** □ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. Free. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

**Brookline** □ Boston Committee **Determined to Free Sharon Kowalski** meets. Boston Self-Help Center, 18 Williston Rd. 7pm. Info: 617/661-0533.

**Cambridge** □ **MASS ACT OUT** meeting. M.I.T., Building 66, Rm. 126. 7:30pm. Info: 617/661-7737.

**Cambridge** □ The **Group Walker Memorial**, MIT on Memorial Drive. Info: 617/266-1129.

**Boston** □ **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** drop-in group for women who have been raped. Info: 617/492-RAPE.

### Friday

**Worcester** □ AIDS Project — Worcester support group for HIV positive, PWAs, PWARCs and supporters. Open to all lesbians and gay men. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Info: Dana 508/755-3773.

**Boston** □ **Healing group** for everyone. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 617/426-9205.

**Cambridge** □ **Women's Coffeehouse** 2/24 An Evening of Healing Thru Art by survivors of incest, rape and battering. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm-midnight. Info: 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

## Black History Month Calendar

### 18 Saturday

**Boston** □ **Black History Month Celebration**, featuring poetry and prose, music and theater. The Gallery in the Piano Craft building, 791 Tremont. St. 3pm. Presented by Black Folks Theater Co. and Middle Passage Educational and Cultural Resources Inc. Free. Also 2/19 and 2/26, \$4. Info: 617/424-8849.

**Cambridge** □ **Woman Black/Black Woman**, a program on Black women in the arts, produced by Brenda Walcott. Featuring painter/photographer Rene Westbrook and poet Kate Rushin. Sponsored by Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women. Cable TV, ch.19, 9pm. Also 2/22.

### 22 Wednesday

**Cambridge** □ The Cambridge Women's Commission and Cambridge Community TV air **Woman, Black / Black Woman**. Cambridge Cable (Channel 19) at 9pm. Info: 617/498-9014.

### 23 Thursday

**Cambridge** □ **Biography and Langston Hughes**, a lecture by Arnold Rampersad, author of "The Life of Langston Hughes." Killian Hall, MIT, 160 Memorial Dr., 8pm. Info: 617/253-9569.

### 25 Saturday

**Boston** □ **The Whitest State In the Nation**: a program about African American Vermonters. 9pm WGBH channel 2; also on Sunday 2/26 at 8pm WGBX channel 44.

### 26 Sunday

**Boston** □ Poet **Kate Rushin** will read at the Piano Factory, Columbus Ave. 3-5pm.

**Roxbury** □ **National Day of Mourning for Joseph Beam**. Spiritual commemoration including open session, music and poetry. First Church, 0 Putnam Street near Madison Park High School. All welcome. 2-5pm. For information about events in other cities, call the NCBLG at (313) 537-0484.

Calendar compiled by  
Erik Moore



By Marc Stein

About two months ago, I visited Fenway Community Health Center in Boston for what I assumed was a urethral infection. My health care provider suggested that if I did have such an infection, I must not be practicing safer sex (medically untrue, as far as I know, and entirely dependent on a specific definition of what constitutes safer sex.) He then asked me if I had been "tested." I said "No," and he strongly encouraged me to do so.

My immediate reaction was shock. I had assumed that Fenway took a neutral position on the very difficult question of whether individuals should be tested for HIV antibodies, with its service providers encouraging individuals to make appropriate choices for themselves. So I asked, "Does Fenway have a policy of encouraging people to be tested?" My provider answered "Yes," which I now believe is a misrepresentation of Fenway policy. He then went on to tell me that, compared to other cities in the United States (including cities much smaller), Boston was

## COMMENTARY COMMENTARY COMMENTARY

"backwards" and "behind" on the question of testing. For him, the communities affected by AIDS in Boston had failed to mobilize widespread support for testing.

I explained that I worked for *GCN* and had organized a roundtable discussion about the politics of HIV testing last June, which was transcribed and published in *GCN* for our Lesbian and Gay Health Supplement (July 24-30, 1988). I told him that there had been — and hopefully still is — a highly politicized debate about testing in Boston, and that there were many valid reasons for choosing not to be tested and discouraging other people from doing so.

Among the many reasons, I want to emphasize three here. One has been persuasively articulated by Kevin Cathcart, Executive Director of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders. Cathcart argues that, in the absence of civil rights protections for lesbians and gay men, people with AIDS and

# Why I don't know my HIV antibody status

*As more and more people choose the test option in light of new and promising AIDS treatments, many longstanding concerns remain. And how do we encourage community solidarity with more people knowing whether they're 'positive' or 'negative'?*

ARC, and people who have tested positive for HIV antibodies, and because of inadequate (and perhaps impossible) assurances of confidentiality, many people have good reason to choose not to be tested. Of course alternative test sites offer some protections. But in many people's experiences, antibody status has been used as a basis for discrimination and violence.

Another reason was explained by roundtable participant Doralba Munoz, then co-chair of the AIDS Action Committee's Multicultural Concerns Committee. She said that without adequate "support systems to ensure quality access to health care for all people," and without assurances that people will have adequate information, psychological support, and other resources,

it is not wise to encourage everyone to be tested. Many groups of people — including People of Color and prisoners — do not have access to many resources that are important for dealing with a positive antibody test result.

A third reason was not raised in my article, but actually was my own primary reason for choosing not to be tested and was partly informed by discussions with now AIDS Action Committee Community Education Director Cindy Patton and writer-activist Michael Bronski. They helped me see that whether it is proposed as a public health strategy or a homophobic and AIDS-phobic political tool, testing can be used to quarantine, segregate, and separate people with AIDS and ARC, people who have tested

positive for HIV antibodies, and indeed the entire lesbian and gay community. Given this possibility, I felt — and still feel — that testing might separate me from portions of my community, by making me a "positive" or "negative" person. This separation could occur because of the ways that others would view me and because of the way I myself might change. Particularly on the question of who I might have sex with, my uncertainty about my own health and the health of my partners helps me remain committed to safer sex. I fear that if I tested negative, I might have unsafe sex with others who I believe to have tested negative; and if I tested positive, I might have unsafe sex with others who I believe to have tested positive (despite knowing something about possible risks of "reinfection").

As part of my political commitment to reject a "locate and restrict points of contagion" public health approach, I chose — and continue to choose — to remain uncertain, living with fears and doubts that bind me more closely — sexually and psychologically — to my community.

Of course I must say that I do this believing — as many do — that if I was tested I would be negative. But I listen to others who believe themselves to be positive arguing the same things. And I myself, because I choose to not test, remain uncertain.

Having said that, I immediately feel the need to make it clear that this is *my* choice, and I mean only to explain my own thinking, partly because I fear that those who share my views are rapidly becoming invisible. I know that for some people, finding out HIV antibody status is an occasion to build closer ties with other people affected by AIDS. For some, knowing the HIV antibody status of oneself and one's partner helps maintain commitments to safer sex.

I once scheduled an appointment to be tested, about one year ago. I had begun to have trouble sleeping, and had become quite AIDS-obsessed, as many of us have. As my appointment date approached, I began imagining the paths I might soon be travelling with a positive or negative result. I realized that my principal emotional motivation to be tested grew out of my sense that I needed to know my antibody status in order to start having sex again. I had been celibate for

Continued on page 6

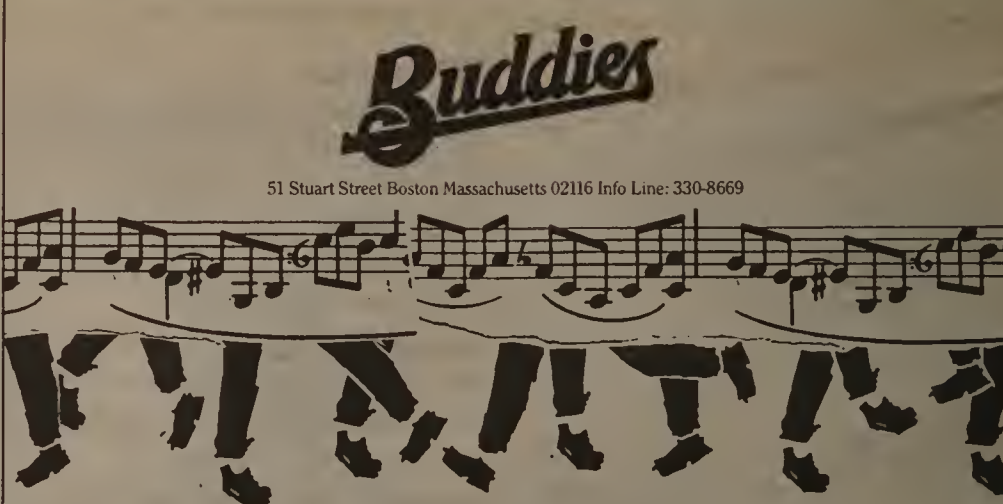


**Rite Wings:**  
The golden rule of the sun

TICKETS: \$8 Glad Day Bookshop, Out of town tickets (492-1900), Ticketron, Teletron (720-3434) and at the door. Seniors/Students: \$5 with ID (at door only). Group rates available: call 232-1555, x355. TICKETRON TELETRON

8 PM Feb. 14-18 • 3 PM Feb. 19  
Tower Aud., Mass. College of Art.  
621 Huntington Ave., Boston.  
Sign Language Interpreted Feb. 14 & 19 only.  
Handicapped Accessible

Civil Rights. Dade County, Florida, 1977.



**Buddies**  
51 Stuart Street Boston Massachusetts 02116 Info Line: 330-8669

Did you know there's a Tea Dance  
on Monday, February 20, President's Day?

**Buddies Dance**

Every Sunday. Every Monday holiday. At 4pm.

## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

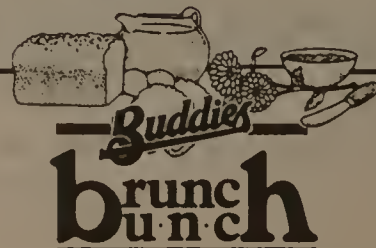
- ★Rates quoted over the phone.
- ★Flexible payment plans.
- ★One day plate service.
- ★No service fees — ever!



## KUNEVICH & LAU INSURANCE AGENCY

CALL THE AGENCY YOU KNOW AND TRUST

offices located at  
168 Brighton Avenue, Allston MA  
782-0400  
4521 Washington St., Roslindale, MA  
323-0800  
241 Washington St., Brookline, MA  
731-1015



## Buddies brunch

Sundays, at 1pm.

Sunday Brunch Buffet includes a Bloody Mary or Mimosa, for \$8.00. From 1pm until Tea Dance at 4pm.